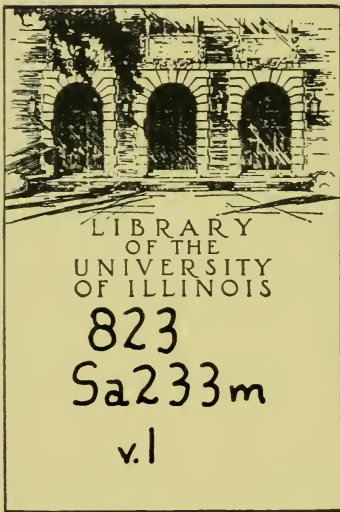


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MR. BLOUNT'S MSS.

VOL. I.

LONDON
PRINTED BY S. AND R. BENTLEY, DORSET STREET.

MR. BLOUNT'S MSS.

BEING

SELECTIONS FROM THE PAPERS

OF

A MAN OF THE WORLD.

BY THE AUTHOR OF GILBERT EARLE.

I waive the quantum o' the sin,
The hazard of concealing—
But, och! it hardens a' within,
And petrifies the feeling!

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

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INTRODUCTION.

THE papers, from which the following pages are selections, were put into my hands, not long ago, with a request that I would arrange and fit them for publication. They consisted, as at present, of a considerable body of letters and journals. I believe that it was originally wished that I should found on these a narrative, or Memoir, of Mr. Blount's Life. But I represented that the materials themselves would answer the purpose far better than any work which could be composed from them;—as they contain

Gen. Blount's Letters

a delineation of his character and habits of thought, drawn by his own hand—unconsciously, indeed—but, for that very reason, with greater truth.

I have, therefore, confined myself to the task of selection, here and there appending a note, where I thought explanation needed. I am also answerable for the mottoes prefixed to each extract.

Mr. Blount seems to have kept up a singularly close and constant correspondence with the friend to whom the letters are addressed. His intimacy with this gentleman appears to have been of a nature peculiarly confidential and unreserved. Indeed, it is often difficult to trace any difference between the tone of the letters and of the private journals. These journals, as I gather, took their origin from being kept, at first, while Mr. Blount was on the Con-

minent ; and, afterwards, were continued from the force of habit. Some parts of them, however, have not the same appearance of being written solely for his own eye. In places, they would almost seem to have been the first sketch towards publication ; a story or two, here and there, being more at length than is usual for a merely private purpose. It is certain, however, that even if my supposition be correct, the sketch is merely the first rough one ; for no where do I trace any marks of revision, or any attempts at elaborate writing.

The reader will find the following sketches exactly in the state in which they are in Mr. Blount's MSS., with the exception only of some trifling verbal corrections : but he is not to suppose that *all* the letters and journals are here published. I have selected only such as I thought illustrative of the

writer, and of human character and passion more generally. There is little, however, in the portion (and it is a large one) written on the Continent, in the nature of what is usually understood by the term "Travels;"—no mere description of places—no catalogue of churches, antiquities, and objects of art. The original deals but very sparingly in these matters; my selections, with the exception of the few pages relating to the Rhine, not at all. I have chosen such scenes and adventures as bore upon the course of the writer's fortunes, from which, as it appears to me, a moral lesson of some usefulness may be drawn. I shall now leave him to speak for himself.

MR. BLOUNT'S MSS.

EXTRACT I.

“ Beauty clear and fair,
Where the air
Rather like a perfume dwells;
Where the violet and the rose
Their blue veins in blush diselose,
And come to honour nothing else.
Where, to live near
And planted there,
Is to live, and still live new ——”

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER.

Tours, September, 1788.

WHAT do I here so long? say you?—
What do I here, for six weeks, at a country town in France, where I ought only to have changed horses, or at most, to have slept

a night, on my road to Paris?—Do you, dear Frewin, ask me such questions as these, at this time of day?—I thought you might have answered yourself. Why, what *could* keep me at such a place beyond four-and-twenty hours, but—a woman?—Ay, and such a woman!—But I will be the ram in Antoine Hamilton's Fairy-Tale; and begin at the beginning.

That which caused me to stay here four-and-twenty hours at all, was, not a woman, but a broken axletree. Blessings on Dessin's rotten carriages!—If mine had stood firm, I should have rolled on the next morning after my arrival, and never have dreamt of what I had missed. But, luckily, I was detained here sorely against my will for a day; and have now been detained here, very much according to my will, for forty.

It is a beautiful country this, hereabouts: The river so fine, and its banks so rich, and

yet so romantic—and then the (not *harvest*, but) *vendange* moon, smiling down upon both so luxuriantly ! Oh ! those moonlight walks by the banks of the Loire ! A year's delay were well repaid by one of them ! But you are still in the dark as to what I am flying into these raptures about : I promised to begin at the beginning, and I will.

I broke down just without the gates of the town, on a Saturday night ; and the next day, being detained, I went to church. The old proverb was verified on the occasion—

“ Near the church—you know the rest—”

I confess my thoughts were wholly abstracted from devout subjects, by my eyes chancing to light upon one of the loveliest creatures which ever crossed their vision, seated at a very short distance from me. She seemed to be about eighteen, and her beauty was equally great and peculiar. She had more even than the usual darkness of com-

plexion of a French woman; her hair was like jet, her eyebrows and eyelashes were, if possible, darker still; and the latter, from their extreme length, appeared to be even more so than they really were. But her eyes were blue—deep, rich, transparent blue; which, with such dark accompaniments, gave an air, certainly of peculiarity, but of most lovely peculiarity, to the expression of her radiant and speaking countenance. Her form was scarcely yet arrived at its complete fulness, but its outline was perfect; and a few months, as it seemed to me, would finish the filling up. Altogether, I had scarcely ever seen a more lovely, certainly, never a more striking, person. But by this expression you must not conceive there was any *ostentation*, if I may be permitted the word, of manner or bearing. On the contrary, the most exquisite delicacy was spread,

like a veil, over this radiant beauty, softening, and yet enhancing, its perfection. You know I am somewhat fastidious, and am not ready to think every pretty face a beautiful one; but this one was so, and I studied it in every light and posture; for I scarcely removed my eyes from it, during the whole service.

My first endeavour was to discover who this lady of the Loire might be; in this there was not much difficulty. She was, it seemed, an Italian. Her mother had been French, and came from Tours. This mother she had lost some six years ago, and had then come to reside, for education, with her maternal aunt. Her education was now complete; and her father was very shortly expected to arrive, to take her back to Italy with him.

Such was the substance of the information,

which, with the assistance of my faithful Eustache, I gleaned concerning her. My next endeavour was of higher flight ; it was to become known to her. Thus I set about it. Her uncle's house is at the outskirts of the town, with a garden stretching down to the river, leaving only just space for a low wall, and a narrow path to intervene between them. Hither, in the evening, I repaired ; but finding that I could not well pace up and down there, without attracting notice, I procured a small skiff, and pulling myself into a spot in a convenient position, with respect to the garden, affected to begin to fish. I cannot say that I have any direful accident to relate of her falling into the water, and of my pulling her out again, as I know I am bound in romance to have. If the truth is to be spoken, I can boast of nothing of this kind ; on the contrary, only of passing several wearisome

hours, with a fishing rod between my legs, and without the least glimpse of my fair one to repay me for my patience and anxiety. At length, just as the twilight was deepening, and I was beginning, in despair, to row homeward, I saw a white gown, in distinct relief, against the dark trees, approaching down the lawn, and fluttering in the evening wind.

It is a pretty sight this—eh, Frewin? The rustle and waving of the drapery of the dear sex—Heaven bless it!—have always in them something strangely moving to my sensations; but when, as in this case, it enwraps a form which might be a Greek statue, only for its living warmth and motion; and when the eyes have been, for hours, aching for the appearance of the individual wearer, then indeed there is a delight in such appearances, which—I shall not punish you by descanting upon at length.

She approached, and seated herself upon a stone bench, so placed as to command a view of the reach of the river. It was not yet so dark but that I could, being, as I was, only a few yards distant, see her distinctly and minutely. She was looking up at the fine summer-evening sky, as if thinking of her own sunny land and azure heavens. At least, I chose to bestow upon her the most becoming train of thought; for I was in a romantic mood, and truly I had something to excite it. There she sat, with her fine hair gently moved by the wind, and her beautiful face slightly up-turned, affording me a perfect view of its sweet, yet powerful expression. Her form, exquisite in motion, exquisite in repose, was reclining against the back of the seat, giving to view the voluptuous sweep of its fine and delicate outline. Her small white fingers supported her cheek,

as she looked upon the twilight scene with those deep blue eyes, which had already struck me as affording so singular and so charming a completion to her southern style of beauty.

The scene, too, upon which she gazed, was in good unison with such a gazer. The river, broad, full, and swift, glided past her with a deep, gurgling sound, expressive, I think, beyond all others in Nature, of serenity, seclusion, and repose. The dark towers of the cathedral of the town, rose against the near horizon on one side; while, on the other, the prospect extended up the river along a valley of exquisite richness, glowing with vineyards just ready for the *vendanges*. Had not I some reason to be a little more exalted than usual?

I was just thinking how I should attract her attention without scaring her, when I perceived a gentleman and a lady advancing

towards her. I recognized them as the uncle and aunt; and wished them where uncles and aunts usually are wished on such occasions—at the devil. I was afterwards, however, not sorry they came; for they had not been there many minutes, before, I conclude at their entreaty, Antonia (for that is her very Italian Christian name) began to sing. I believe music is a natural Italian instinct. It is artificial in France—it is only in its infancy in England—but of an Italian it is the vernacular speech. Antonia sang exquisitely; her voice was fuller and richer in its sweetness, than I should have anticipated from her appearance; her singing was wholly without pretension, and with scarcely any ornament; but, on the contrary, with simple execution of a very charming melody, and with remarkable distinctness of enunciation of the words. This

last quality it was, which enabled me to follow the poetry ; for she sang in Italian, and if it had been with the usual cadenzas and flourishes that we hear at the Opera House, my limited proficiency in the language would not have allowed me to understand more of her song than I usually do of Madame Mara's—about half-a-dozen words, namely ; such as “péne, bene, crudeltà, felicità,” and such stock rhymes of the *libretti*. What I now heard, in a scene, and from a singer, so very different, was a sort of rondeau, of which the point consisted in the repetition of the answer “Non so !” to a succession of variously combined questions concerning love ; thereby importing that the maker of the said answer, as yet, knew nothing of that *Amore*, who, as one of the rhymes informed me, was *Dominatore* of half the world beside. As at the end of each stanza, after

a short pause to give all the questions full effect, Antonia, softly, sweetly, and distinctly, added the emphatic "Non so!", I could not but think, as well as hope, that what she said was not merely general poetical fiction, but true in her own individual case. "She has only left the convent a few weeks," said I to myself, recalling the information I had gained concerning her, "so there is some chance that the answer may be applicable to herself. I should like to be her instructor in the sweet knowledge of which she professes her ignorance!"

As the last words of the last stanza died away upon her lips, I made some exclamation of admiration and delight, which attracted the notice of the trio. As I had no particular wish to become known to the seniors of the party, I shoved off my boat,

which had lain close under the bank, and pulled down the river as fast as I could go.

So ended my first attempt at an interview. You will say, I did not achieve much by it ; but it proved a good foundation-stone, as you shall hear in my next. For the present, I have filled my gigantic sheet, [can you read it thus crossed ?] and, moreover, time, tide, and the post, wait for no man ; and the last of these impatient persons, or things, (which you will) is about to set off. I will write again in the course of the week ; meanwhile believe me ever and ever your's,

PHILIP BLOUNT.

You may continue to direct hither, till further orders.

EXTRACT II.

“ This bud of love, by summer’s ripening breath,
May prove a beauteous flow’r, when next we meet.”

SHAKSPEARE.

[The following is from Mr. Blount’s Note-book ;
under a date about a fortnight *previous* to that
of the foregoing letter.]

Tours, August, 1788.

“ Qualis nox illa ! Dii, Deæque ! ”—What a
night has this been ! Truly may I place a
double white-stone at its date—for such pe-
riods cannot very frequently occur !* Come,

* Throughout these diaries, the days which Mr. B.
chooses to consider as having been fortunate or happy,
are distinguished by a red-ink mark. At the above date,
and at one or two others, this mark is crossed, by which
it would seem a double degree of good fortune was im-
plied.

my trusty note-book, let me set down in you the sensations of the last few hours, while they are yet glowing in instant memory.—It will be the best way to make my spirits subside down to sleeping-point; they are incalculable degrees above that Zero now.

Oh! the moonlight banks of the Loire! shall I ever forget you? No!—whatever scenes I may gaze on, whatever sensations I may feel, the soft dream of young Passion, which your calm solitudes have witnessed this night, will, with yourselves, be for ever graven on my heart's memory!

And yet, after all, there are many men, nay there are many women too, who would look with considerable disdain on what has put me into all this rapture; and regard me, to use their own language, as being very *soft*, for putting to no further effect the scene in which I have just been an actor.

And do I regret that I did not take, or try to take, the advantages, which perhaps I might have done, of Antonia's gushing fondness, and utter self-abandonment?—No, by Heaven!—The full confession, and delicious *history* of her love for me, from its first doubtful dawn, to its present full ripeness, were not more grateful to my soul, as she uttered them, in her own sweet voice, upon my bosom, than is now the reflection that I did not break in upon such a train of feeling in her heart, by any thing grosser than her own fond and pure affection. The first emotions of love in the breast of a young and beautiful woman, are of an exalted and holy nature. And happy am I that I did not mar these attributes, by showing to what different issues they may be turned; how the highest and strongest feelings which Nature has implanted within

us, can be made subservient to the cause of sinful and inferior passion. I did not break in upon this blissful dream; I did not waken the fair creature, who was exposing to me the state of her young heart, beating and burning in all the fondness and confidence of a first affection, to a sense of the gross and degrading *reality* of man's love. What *is* man's love as compared to woman's? Nothing—worse than nothing. In its weakness and in its strength—in the fever of its hottest moments, and in the agueish coldness of its speedy decline—in fervour, in fondness, in endurance, in steady constancy—in each, in all, in every thing, man's love, in comparison with that of woman, is poor, weak, cold, paltry, yielding, changeful, evanescent, to the last and most intense degree!

And never did I feel the truth of this

more than as Antonia, to-night, revealed to me, in all the minuteness of detail, which is so delicious to lovers, the progress of her attachment towards me, and how each circumstance of our intercourse had affected it. The mixture (which in any thing but the manifestation of a heart, young, and fresh, and singularly unpractised, would be incongruous) of the most perfect frankness with delicacy equally perfect—of conscious fervency of feeling, and unconscious warmth of expression; or, at least, unconsciousness of the deductions to which they would lead:—the whole picture, in short, which she presented of the first impression of love upon the heart of a sensitive and ardent woman,—not only confirmed my previous belief, but encreased its extent exceedingly, of how different this same passion is in its operation on the two sexes.

Of myself, in the present instance, I do not speak. It is not now that I am to experience, for the first time, what love is; my feelings must necessarily be widely different from her's. I was first struck by her beauty, then by her delicacy of heart, and general accomplishments of understanding. Then I had the desire of success, the wish to excite her love; and, as I advanced, I felt the conscious satisfaction of success, in watching the progress and developement of her affection. Nor could I be in close and frequent intercourse with a person so attractive, and fascinating, without finding every day the love I feigned, to be less—and the love I felt, to be more. All these sensations added together, may amount to what most persons would class under the generic appellation “Love.” But how different is this, even were it twenty times more than it is, from what *she*

feels!—And what do I intend to do with this love, now that I have excited it? That is a question of which I have delayed the answer so long, that—I cannot now stop to answer it.

And yet, when I reflect that it is only a month since we first met, the whole business seems almost as a dream! What a chance it was that I saw her at all!—what a chance that I stopped at Tours more than a night! And am I glad or sorry that it did so chance? Faith, I am not prepared to answer that question either. I certainly had no intention that matters should have gone to such a serious extent when I began; but, one step led on another, till—I will not think what the next must be.

A month!—it is a very short time for the heart to have gone the whole round, from indifference and calmness to the highest pitch

of passion. Plague take it ! why must I intrude upon her state of peacefulness, to lead her upon that stormy sea, of which as yet she knows not half the dangers ? The colour of her existence has been changed, her whole self has taken a new tone, in one short month ! And yet, when I reflect how many hours we have passed alone together during that month—and what accessories of time and place have attended those meetings, it is not a *very* short time either. What phases of passion must her heart have undergone, while that moon has been completing her's ! And even I have felt severe anxieties. My heart has become far more interested in the matter than I ever intended it should have done ; with such a creature, I should have been a brute if it had been otherwise. But this night has paid me for all ! Is there any thing ?—there is *not* any thing, which can be compared

with the first thorough and complete avowal, *in words*, of a woman's love for us!—And then the recapitulation of all the fluctuations of fear, and hope, and fondness, and pique, and, at last, of full, flowing, fervent, undoubting love—what can equal *this*? While we listen to her dear voice, as it is breathed in that soft delicate tone in which woman speaks of love; while we press her closer to the heart, as each expression of fondness rises above the other; while we recall our own ideas of the probable effects of each circumstance of which she now reveals the real results—and as we, in our turn, contrast and compare these with each other; while, above all, every doubt which still might have remained—all fear, of which some might perhaps have lingered—are destroyed in the flood of love and certainty;—during such times as these, we might, for the moment, fancy our-

selves in a state of being more blissful than this world is given to bestow.

“What am I to do with the love I have thus excited?” This question recurs, and recurs again, with increasing importunity for answer? But it is late, and my head aches; I will go to bed—to sleep, if I can—and postpone my answer till to-morrow.

EXTRACT III.

“ We part—and had we never met,
Happy had it been for thee :—
My love has been thy bane ; but yet
Oh ! cease not to remember me !” ANON.

[The following letter is not in immediate succession to that last given.]

Tours, October 1st, 1788.

MY DEAR FREWIN,—

AFTER the receipt of this, direct to Paris. I set off to-morrow morning. The game is played out, and I must return to acting with common sense, if I cannot feel with it just yet. I experience, at this moment, all the sensations of *le lendemain*, equally prevalent in morals as in physics. To be sure, it has been Champagne, and of

the first vintage, on which I have been banqueting; no wonder that I should have exceeded over night, and experience all the revulsion and depression of "the next day." Now am I in that mood that I could throw myself upon yonder couch, and cry for an hour or two, "with all the pleasure in life," as the Irishman says. Partly from spite, partly from the sudden sinking of overwrought spirits, and partly from *bonâ-fide* sorrow,—I could weep my heart out at my eyes, and, I am sure, should feel my bosom lightened by the operation. But I won't. I have nobody to blame but myself. It has all been my own doing; there 's no denying it. The bad was certainly my own doing; and the pride of my wicked self, will not let me cry for that. The right determination to which I came yesterday, was likewise my own doing; and what there is good in me will

not allow me to weep for this part of the matter: and yet, I question, whether I do not lament this last, which is my resolution to part from Antonia, far more than what I have characterised as bad; namely, my intercourse with her for the last two months. I have, indeed, been once or twice on the point of breaking through it, and setting off after her. "After her?" you will say.—Yes! she is gone, gone back to Italy, with her father; and we have parted, in all likelihood for ever!

I believe I told you, when I first spoke to you on this subject, that Antonia was shortly to return to Italy, her father being almost daily expected to arrive to take her back. If he had come when he was first expected, namely, within a few days of my arrival here, what a difference it would have made in his daughter's fate! Alas, Frewin,

what unthinking scoundrels we men are!—
What lasting mischief do we cause from connexions which we begin, without giving one thought as to what they are to end in! But *this* does make me think,—“now that it is too late,” you will add; and, alas! truly.

What upon earth could possess me to throw away my time here, devoting myself—to what?—Why, to making a most amiable, beautiful, and interesting girl, unhappy. And *for* what? Why, for the sake of gratifying my own infernal vanity in rendering a creature thus charming, attached to my own sweet self. And what ultimate object did I propose to myself? Why, none! I shunned the question; I drove it from me, as often as it presented itself to my mind. What did I intend to do? Did I intend to marry?—or to do worse? Faith, I intended nothing. Marry I would not; nor would I “do worse,”

even supposing that I could, of which I am by no means clear. I resolutely would look upon nothing beyond the present moment. I placed a curtain within six inches of my mental eyes, and would rather have cut off my hand, than have raised it to throw open the view. Is not this a pretty *compte rendu* of my actions and feelings for the last two months of my life? Is it not a statement so clear, lucid, and satisfactory, as to reflect infinite honour upon the sense and meaning of the person who is able to make it? Truly, I think so. It is exceedingly flattering to me in every point of view; and leaves me, at the end of the summer, with a very comfortable retrospect, of how profitably, for myself and others, it has been spent.

Pshaw!—it is enough to make one look with contempt upon oneself, to consider how blind we are when the least dazzling of pas-

sion is effected upon our eyes; and in how vastly different a light we regard things, when the scales fall from off them. I can see the folly, to use no harsher term, of my own conduct, now, as well as any indifferent observer—nay, better, for I have a more intimate knowledge of the facts. And yet it was only yesterday that I had a most severe struggle with myself, to prevent my putting the climax to the injuries I have done this poor girl, by urging her to become the partner of my journey, instead of her father's. I had not regained the clear use of my moral eyesight then, or I should not have paused for a moment upon a proposition so fraught with (for I must speak it out) dark guilt and wickedness.

I am far, indeed, from feeling at all satisfied with myself for what I *have* done. I have marred, irrevocably, the happy state of peace-

fulness in which I found her ; I have—— but hang it ! I will not go croaking on as to what I have done :—what I am about to do is, to set off for Paris to-morrow, where I hope very speedily to hear from you. Meanwhile, I will close my letter, for I can write on no subject but one, and that I had rather let alone for the present.

Your's ever,

P. B.

[The following passage in the Diary relates to the same occurrence.]

Orléans, October 2, 1788.

What a contrast does this solitary, desolate evening present to those I have been passing lately ! I wish I had not stopped, but that I had continued travelling all night ; for then, at any rate, the difference would not have pressed so forcibly upon me. I never found my inn at Tours solitary of an even-

ing. The Loire, with its full stream and its beautiful banks, was my evening abode,—and Antonia, dear, dear, lost Antonia! my companion. Yes! she is, indeed, lost to me! It is a chance, beyond calculation, whether I ever see her again! And I have seen her so constantly of late—she has been so exclusively not only my object of interest, but my companion, that the vacuum in my heart at our separation is beyond description. It is the most painful and desolating sensation in the world. I have felt it before now, and from the same cause, but never with the same intensity. All the affections of my heart, all the exertions of my mind, have been so strongly and undividedly concentrated upon this one individual, that the sudden cessation of our intercourse is certainly one of the most painful and sickening revulsions that I have ever undergone. “The affections of my

heart?" And were they really so deeply implicated in the matter?—In good truth, I believe they were; far more, undoubtedly, than I meant they should have been, when I began. But I suppose the moth does not intend to burn himself, when he flutters round the flame. He had better not come there at all, though, if he wishes to remain unsinged. Yes! my affections have indeed become more enthralled than I had any fear of their becoming. I thought I had more command over them; I thought I had them fastened, like a falcon by a string, and that I could let them take short and gentle flights, and recall them at will. But the cord, I suppose from being a silken one, broke, and the 'tassel-gentle' would not be 'lured back again.'

And yet I have permitted that we should part! I almost wonder at myself, at times, for having had the resolution to do so. Nay,

at this moment, if she were here before me, I almost think I should sacrifice every consideration—youth, liberty, all—and give her heart and hand together, and at once. 'Tis well then, perhaps, she is not here; for if I were to let my romance and my passion run away with me in this way, I should, ten to one, speedily and lastingly rue having so far lapsed from my usual self-command in these matters. I ought to have learned, and earned it too, by this time; and I thought I had; but I have been near smarting for my presumption. No! no! I will not be cast into Benedick yet awhile!

For the rest, what if I had persuaded her to accompany me on this journey, without being my wife? I could, I think, if I had tried very hard. But my conscience, unaccustomed as I am to hear him much, whenever I trenched towards the subject, spoke so

loud as to drown every thing else, and to silence me altogether. I cannot say that my conscience, on these occasions, used very flattering language. ‘Scoundrel!’ ‘villain!’ were among the gentlest of his hypothetical epithets; and, as I could not belie him, granting his hypothesis, I had nothing left for it but to prevent *that* being made real.

Never was any thing conducted so totally without object—never was any thing so completely of means, without an end. I had no object when I began, beyond the moment; and afterwards also, every moment was insulated in itself throughout our intercourse. It stood upon its own grounds, and had no reference to any thing that was to follow. Neither have I any point of time, however distant, to look to when we may meet again. There is no resting-place for Hope—even in the prospect of a life. And do I wish, then,

that she should forget me? No! I do not, I cannot wish it. When I bade her forget me, in words—my voice and my manner belied them; and when she said “Never!” I could not repeat the prohibition. No! as my impression was the first made upon her heart, may it ever continue the deepest!

It is only two nights since we sat on our green knoll together, our hearts yearning with increased fondness—our souls saddened and softened by our approaching separation. How beautiful she looked! Her eyes shaded by tenderness and by sadness—yet beaming with the ennobling fire of a woman’s early love! This miniature, when I first saw it, I thought the happiest likeness I had ever beheld; the *expression* was so admirably seized and rendered. But what is it to that which her face wore when I last gazed upon it? Oh! there is nothing on this earth so

beautiful, so touching, so noble, as the countenance of a young and lovely woman glowing with the enthusiasm of fervent and undoubting love, yet softened by the imminence of one of those crosses which such love is sure to meet !

Two nights ago, I gazed upon her living self—she was by my side—I pressed her to my heart—I still might have prevented our parting. Now, this bit of senseless ivory is all I have in exchange—leagues of distance interpose between us—we *have* parted, and for ever !

EXTRACT IV.

“ On se convient, on s'arrange; on s'ennuie, et on se quitte.”

LA CLOS.

[From the Diary.]

Paris, January 24, 1789.

I AM not, and do not affect to be, particularly straight-laced ;—but, really, the way in which people go on here is enough to startle even me. I had, of course, heard a good deal of the laxness of society in France—that is, in Paris, which *is* France—but my expectation did not approach the reality. Here, good-conduct is the exception, the very rare exception,—and cross purposes are the rule. I say ‘cross-purposes,’ for many of these

liaisons are such, that, for the life of me, I can divine no other cause for their existence, except that they are wrong and forbidden. The old story of the Duchesse de Longueville exclaiming “*Quel dommage que ce n'est pas un péché !*” when she drank a glass of iced water in hot weather, furnishes the principle upon which the daily life and conversation of half the people in Paris are conducted. It is no longer a *mot*, deriving its point from its exaggeration, but the every-day spirit in which the every-day intercourse of society is carried on. The common topics of conversation are conformable. One day La Comtesse de *This* has *sacrifié* the Chevalier *That*, to the Marquis de *T'other* ;—the next day we hear of the Comtesse being *sacrifiée* in her turn for La Baronne somebody else ; and thus does the world revolve at Paris. And if by any chance a husband should venture to re-

monstrate upon such a course of proceeding, he is voted a *brutal*, and hooted out of all decent society ! Truly this is ‘ a mad world, my masters !’

Now, all this, I confess, seems to me to be exceedingly repulsive. The *necessity*, which they make of it here, for a lady to set up a lover with her wedding-coach, appears to me, if it were only from its regularity, a piece of profligacy almost ludicrous, from being, as it were, invested with all the restraints and choices of duty. Of late, since the Anglo-manie has prevailed, the *elegans* of the Court, among other bungling imitations of the English, have affected to fill their *petites maisons* with persons of a lower class of society. It is enough to kill one with laughter to hear the uproar which the ladies of the Court make on this subject,—not from any purity of mind, or delicacy of feeling—not even from any

aristocratical sentiments, (though, Heaven knows! these are strong enough among them,) but because they feel that their own places are usurped-- that these nameless personages monopolize the attentions which they conceive to be due to themselves alone. They talk of *scandale*, and *libertinage*, and want of *bienséance*, in a manner which, considering the quarter from whence it comes, is edifying to the last degree. In the more polite times of twenty years back, it was incumbent upon a man of quality to intrigue only with the wife of his friend. That was quite as it should be, and was never gainsaid. But to abandon these persons to regularity of conduct, whether they will or no, and intermix with plebeian paramours; that, indeed, is an iniquity—a breach of morals and of virtue—which it is impossible to reprobate too loudly, or too severely.

They are curious people, these Parisians ; for all the folly and the vice of which I have been speaking are in no degree overcharged ; and yet there are some good points about them too. In despite of all this, which, one would imagine, would go near to decompose society altogether, it is impossible anywhere for intercourse to be on a footing so polished, so cultivated, so delightful. There is, to be sure, a tinge and a tone of heartlessness and *désouci*, which occasionally appear something too strongly—and give a rough unpleasant jarring to the feelings, for the moment ; but, for a man who goes into society merely to amuse himself, I can scarcely conceive any thing more delightful than that which he will meet at Paris. There is a general cultivation and smoothness—a tone, if not of wit, at least of conventional manner and expression which passes for it, and, in truth, is

very like it, which we should in vain look for in London. To a foreigner, like myself, who have kept, as much as I could, aloof from the spirit of coterie, and, as a foreigner, have been in great measure allowed to do so, there is the additional advantage of being a looker-on, rather than an actor; and thence observing, and being amused by, a thousand little points of peculiarity, sometimes of ridicule, which, sharp-scented as the Parisians are after this last species of game, they themselves wholly overlook. If I chose, which I do not, to betray the private life and manners of those by whom I have been received in the confidence of hospitality, and under the implied trust which exists in society, I could, I think, draw some smart portraits of a few of the persons who have been conspicuous on the stage of Parisian society this winter. This year, in particular, the charac-

ters of many have had all their points of ridicule prominent about them, with the superaddition of some which can scarcely be said to have been developed in them before—I allude to the mania for politics, which at this time possesses every Frenchman breathing. A topic which, ten years ago, was scarcely ever broached in Parisian conversation, and never on any subject more general than the disgrace of a minister, or the issue of a court intrigue, has lately occupied the head and the tongue of every Frenchman, and of every Frenchwoman, who thinks and talks, or who talks without thinking. The monopoly of the theatres is no more—the merits of the Clairon and the Dumesnil are passed away with themselves, and would no longer be subjects of discussion, if they were to revive in all the pride of their talents and their beauty. M. Necker's return to office

—his talents for finance—M. de Mirabeau's last pamphlet—the assembling of the States General—these are the subjects which now occupy the tongues of every *salon* in Paris. Heaven knows where it will all end ! Such a thorough change in the talking habits of the most talking people in the world, must surely prognosticate something extraordinary. However, 'qui vivra verra,'—we shall all know if we live long enough. The meeting of the States General will be a memorable event, and it shall not be my fault if I miss seeing it.

EXTRACT V,

“ Il fût des citoyens avant qu’il fût des maîtres ;
Nous rentrons dans les droits qu’ont perdus nos
ancêtres.” HENRIADE ; CHANT IV.

[From the Diary.]

Paris, May, 1789.

THERE never was any thing like the universal mania for politics which at this moment pervades every body in Paris. The French, more than any other people, are susceptible of one all-ingrossing subject, to the exclusion of every other, however different in kind as well as in degree. When one topic has thoroughly become the fashion, no other is admitted into decent society. In

the last century, nothing was spoken of but the Molinistes and Jansénistes. A few years back, the relative merits of French and Italian music ingrossed all ears, hearts, and minds; and, by a curious coincidence, the *coin du Roi* and *coin de la Reine*, were, from the places where they sat at the Opera, the distinguishing names given to the two parties.

The adherents of ‘*le Roi*,’ and ‘*la Reine*,’ have now, however, matters of a very different calibre to occupy them. And I must do my friends, the Parisians, the justice to say that, with regard to both novelty and importance, their present objects of interest are incomparably superior to the trifles which have interested them for the last hundred years. Indeed, I have been led into these expressions, from the impatience, arising from the universality and exclusiveness of the topics of conversation in society, rather

than from at all thinking lightly of the ground of their subject matter.

For instance, I am sure I was as much struck and moved with the spectacle I beheld the other day at Versailles, as any Frenchman could be, for the life of him. It was only after I had come away, that the suggestion at all offered itself to my mind, that the French can do nothing without some mixture of theatric exhibition. I conclude from its never occurring to me during its continuance, that *this* might be an occasion when such display is not misplaced.

I went down to Versailles, with a quantity of other sight-seers from Paris, on the evening of the 3d; and fortunately I was accommodated with a seat at a window admirably situated to command a view of the procession of the next day. The meeting (or, as they call it here, the opening) of the

States General was fixed for the 5th; and I was told that the procession of the Deputies to the church, the day before, would be amongst the most imposing parts of this remarkable solemnity. In effect, I found it so.

The number of Deputies amounted to twelve hundred; and the particular order which they represented was readily apparent to the eye, from the difference of their dress. The clergy appeared in the full robes of their profession, distinguishing between their various ranks. The immense crowds of people who were present, seemed to look with less interest on this body than on either of the other two. The French have, undoubtedly, long ceased to be fanatics. It would be impossible to excite a second St. Bartholemi now. The clergy, for many years back, have been losing their consideration with the people;—partly from the scandal of the lives

of some of them, partly from the contemptible frivolity of that of others ;—and partly from a large portion of the remainder having gathered about the throne, and played the part of mere court-followers.

The nobles were dressed in the full French costume, with the plumed hat, and sword by their side ;—which to some, I confess, appeared to be rather incumbrances than ornaments. The nobility have generally been distinguished for their military grace and glory : but this now exists only in recollection ; for, with the exception of the few short campaigns in America, the French armies have seen no service since the peace of 1763. All the distinguished officers of that day have passed away ; and the present race have grown up in garrison duty, relieved by the dissipation of Parisian society. The increase, too, of the created nobles has been very great of

late years; and these unhappy persons seem, like the bat in the fable, to belong neither to the beasts nor the birds. The general characteristic of the noble deputies, as they marched by, was undoubtedly a sombre and sour cast of countenance; for as they are at the top of the wheel, and as the very meeting of the States General proves that it will turn in some degree, they figure to themselves no very particular pleasure in the events which will probably follow. Indeed, it is pretty generally understood that the exemption of the privileged orders from taxation must, of necessity, be immediately abolished.

But the most imposing part of the sight was, beyond all doubt, the Deputies of the Tiers Etat. They were dressed in plain clothes and long black cloaks; but in number, in general appearance, and, above all, in

talents and enlightenment, they most indisputably possess the superiority over their colleagues. They are chiefly composed, as I am informed, of merchants, of men of letters, and, above all, of lawyers. Some few nobles, however, have chosen to be returned by the third order.

Among these is the celebrated Comte de Mirabeau — a man who, in various ways, has acquired a reputation, bad and good, far beyond that of any of his fellow deputies. He was pointed out to me as he marched along; and, though far from being handsome, he has undoubtedly the air of a man of no ordinary kind. He was remarkable, in the crowd, for the extreme length and profusion in which he wore his hair, which gave his physiognomy a very singular aspect. His face is pale and pock-marked, but his forehead is broad and square, and his eye

and his mouth both evince the traits of the firmest determination, and the most unquenchable ardour.

Great things are expected from this celebrated person. He is spoken of with much enthusiasm—from some, of admiration, from others, of hatred; but I have heard no one mention him with affection. The wrongs of his early years (he has been repeatedly imprisoned by *lettres-de-cachet*) were followed by the most flagrant moral irregularities, in the issue of nearly all of which he ultimately triumphed, by sheer dint of his own talents, skill, audacity, and eloquence. He has now a nobler and wider field for his eloquence; and, if he be the man he is considered to be, he cannot fail to go a great way.

The next day, the opening of the Session itself took place. A large temporary building had been erected, in the avenue of Versailles, to receive the Deputies. A consider-

able number of strangers were admitted to witness the scene; and I was able to procure a ticket. At the upper end of the hall was placed a raised platform, with the throne for the King, an arm-chair for the Queen, and chairs without arms for the rest of the Royal Family.* Below, the Deputies were arranged. The clergy stretched down the hall on the right hand, the nobles on the left, and the Tiers Etat faced the platform.

After waiting a considerable time, the King and Queen entered. At this moment, I felt very strongly that indescribable sensation which is experienced when we personally witness a ceremony relating to great historical events, more especially when it is one at which a great body of people assists. It is an impression (if I may so speak) of solem-

* The etiquette of the French Court, with respect to seats, is something ludicrous. The Queen has a *fauteuil*; those of the blood royal, *des chaises*; and certain orders of the nobility, *des tabourets*. This is precious fooling.

nity, which is physically felt chiefly in its effect upon the respiration, and from thence upon the muscles of the breast. But I should in vain attempt to describe it. It is sufficiently well known to those who have experienced it themselves.

The Queen was evidently in considerable agitation: her colour came and went; and she seemed to be assisting at an assembly to which, and to its purposes, she felt no goodwill. I could not help being struck with the singular effect which (to my English eyes) the appearance of the Queen, thus officially among the representatives of the nation, made upon me. Surely it is something anomalous in a nation in which the salique law exists.

The King was calm and even cold, which is the general expression of his countenance. He seemed little moved by the perfect novelty and singular importance of the crisis,

and of the position in which he stood ; but delivered the speech, with which the business of the day opened, with a steady and simple enunciation, and a quiet dignity of manner, which, I am told, are the usual characteristics of his public appearances.

The Chancellor (M. de Barantin) also spoke ;—as did M. Necker, who delivered a long and able statement of the financial condition of the country. This celebrated person has an air of simplicity and firmness, much in keeping with the character of his administration—and his official statement was given with all that clearness, which might be expected from so distinguished a financier.

With his discourse terminated the business of this remarkable day. All the world is now occupied in discussing in how many chambers the Deputies are to sit. No resolution seems yet to have been made upon the subject ; and every body talks, writes,

and thinks of nothing else. Some say it will be in one, some two, some three ; but, for my part, I hear too much about it, every day and all day, to have the slightest inclination to debate the matter now upon paper.

NOTE, by the Editor. The letters and diaries of Mr. Blount at this period are, very naturally, almost wholly ingrossed with the details of the French Revolution which fell under his observation. For obvious reasons, however, it is not my purpose to insert them here. But the following account of the taking of the Bastille involves no political discussion—and, as being the narrative of an eye-witness, may prove interesting to my readers. It was, in some degree, to prepare them for at least the tone of the period, that I have preceded it with the account of the meeting of the States General, which they have just read.

EXTRACT VI.

“ ——— Cet affreux château, palais de la vengeance,
Qui renferme souvent le crime et l'innocence ! ”

HENRIADE ; CHANT IV.

[From the Diary.]

Paris, July, 1789.

TRULY, these are awful times we live in. A time incredibly short suffices to work the most stupendous changes. A very few hours have annihilated that which had stood for ages. That fearful prison-house, whose “secrets” were known to few, and revealed by none, is thrown open to the gaze of all ; — the Bastille is no more ! A person leaving Paris, last week, would, as he passed out Southward, have gone close under the walls of this

fortress, which could never be contemplated without a feeling allied both to disgust and awe;—returning now, he would find it empty, dismantled, and with workmen actively employed in totally razing it to the ground. To what a train of moral feelings does it not give rise, thus to have free access and regress to and from a place hitherto so closely secured and so vigilantly guarded;—to walk familiarly and without impediment among those walls, which have for ages formed the very bugbear of arbitrary and secret imprisonment; into which so many, like the beasts in the fable of the Sick Lion's Cave, entered, but never returned again! But I have taken up my pen to record facts while they are fresh in instant memory—I shall have plenty of time for moralizing whenever I may choose to occupy myself so vainly.

I was an eye-witness of a great part of

the engagement (if so it can be called) on the 14th. For about eight-and-forty hours previous to that memorable day, there had been indications of some great movement on the part of the people. Men left their ordinary business, and were to be seen moving about with faces of importance and of excitement, or standing in groups engaged in eager and animated conversation. Towards the evening of the 12th, many of these appeared in arms ; and by nightfall an astonishing number of armed citizens were assembled in their different districts. No one knew where this thunder-cloud would discharge itself. Every now and then, however, a gloomy murmur of the word *Bastille* tended to indicate where it would break. There had, some short time previously, been a tumult in the Fauxbourg Saint-Antoine, which had induced the governor, M. de

Launay, to put the Bastille into some state of defence ; and his preparations had, it is said, increased in proportion with the augmentation of the ferment in Paris. There were altogether upon the towers about fifteen pieces of cannon, eight and four-pounders ; but, as it would seem, they were almost totally useless for any purpose beyond that of firing a salute,—either from decay ; or from the manner in which they were mounted completely exposing those who served the guns, in the act of reloading them. There were, however, some small pieces, between cannon and small-arms, called *amusettes du Comte de Saxe*, placed at different loop-holes, besides a piece of ordnance charged with grape, which was placed in one of the courts. The garrison consisted of eighty-two Invalids, and of thirty-two men of a Swiss regiment, under the command of a lieutenant

In the present state of the public mind, these preparations for defence appeared to be for offence; and violent murmurs were excited by the appearance of the ordnance on the towers. Early on the 14th a deputation from the Hôtel-de-Ville waited on the governor, to state the agitation which these guns caused, and to request that they might be removed. M. de Launay answered, that he could not dismount the guns without an order from the king; but that, having already received some intimation of the feelings of the people with regard to them, he had had them run back as far from the embrasures, as it was possible. Some members of this deputation were even permitted to go all over the fortifications, that they might judge with their own eyes of how every thing stood; and the garrison swore to them that they would not fire, nor make

use of them, unless they were first attacked. With this they seemed tolerably satisfied, and, for the time, retired.

In about half an hour afterwards, however, an immense crowd of people arrived before the Bastille, armed with every species of weapon, and of offensive instruments which could be used as such. Guns, swords, axes, all were put into requisition; there was scarcely a man who had not one or the other. They shouted “We will have (*nous voulons*) the Bastille!—down with the soldiers!—down with the Bastille!” With these cries they approached the out-works in very considerable numbers: the men on the walls, it seems, called out to them, to warn them of the danger they were in, exposed as they were to the fire of the place; but they came on, no whit daunted, and gained possession of the first small

draw-bridge by an act of individual activity and courage, not a little remarkable.

A man, who was, as I have heard, an old soldier, climbed upon the roof of the house nearest to the bridge, (a perfumer's shop); and, from thence, got upon the outmost wall—from this he let himself drop upon the top of the guard-house; and thence into the court. He searched in the guard-house for the keys of the draw-bridge, to which he was now close, but they had been removed. He then called to his associates for an axe. This was thrown to him—with this he broke the bolts and locks which secured the bridge—and it fell!—In like manner, with more hands, the great outer draw-bridge was also lowered; and the assailants had now footing in the outworks of the place.

All this time the garrison had forborne

to fire. Indeed no shot had been discharged on either side. But, emboldened by this success, the assailants rushed, in a mass, to carry the second bridge also ; and, as they came on, they fired a volley upon the garrison. This was returned ; and with so much effect that they retreated under different vaulted archways of the outer courts, to protect themselves from the fire of the troops. From hence they kept up a continual fire, but they did not advance against the second bridge.

What I have hitherto related, I did not personally witness ; but I have gathered it since, from the thousand and one tongues which have been occupied with nothing else, from that time to this. It was after matters had been, for about an hour, in the state which I have just described, that I arrived

within view of the scene. Thus it came about :—

I am in the division of what Sterne calls Inquisitive Travellers ; that is, I take care to see every thing I consider worth seeing in the places where I am. I do not mean mere churches and pictures, for there are many things I place far above them in my list of curiosity. But, for sights which bear upon and develope human character generally, and national character in particular, I am a complete *badaud*.* The great historical events which have taken place since I have been in Paris, have furnished ample food for this appetite ; and I have banqueted on them accordingly. I go frequently to Versailles to be present at the meetings of the National Assembly ; I walk about the

* A Parisian word, for a person who runs to see sights.

streets of Paris, looking at every thing, listening to every thing, and saying nothing, except to my trusty note-book here, which is my confidant. If I ever dabbled in print, I think it could produce a decent octavo volume, under some such title as ‘Events of the French Revolution, by an Eye-witness;’ or, ‘Paris and Versailles in 1789;’ or some such *ad captandum* name. At all events, it would have the advantage of being more accurate as to facts, than nine-tenths of the pamphlets which are daily vomited from the press in London upon this subject. I open my eyes and ears, and see and hear what passes, and I book it forthwith; and this I take to be the true way to have an accurate record of what is going on.

In my observatory rambles with these objects in view, I frequently direct my steps towards the Hôtel-de-Ville; for, since the muni-

cipalities have acquired such an accession of consideration, and thence of power, *that* is the chief nucleus of the overt acts which take place in Paris. I was there on the 14th—from the general impression that something extraordinary must result from the ferment of the last two days; but without having any idea of the extent to which the movement of the people would be carried. I arrived there about one o'clock, just at the moment that a deputation from the city was about to proceed to the Bastille; the news of its being attacked having rapidly spread, and the sound of the firing being a continuous proof that the attack was still prosecuted. The deputation marched with a drum and a flag, in order, I believe, to assert their official character; and thousands upon thousands were gathering in its train.

Now, I had some debate with myself as

to the course I should pursue:—I had the strongest desire to get a sight of the siege of the Bastille, but I had no sort of inclination to be shot in the endeavour to gratify it. Had I been a Frenchman, my decision on the subject must have been made long ago; but, being a foreigner, I thought it would be the height of folly to get myself knocked on the head for the concerns of the French people. “*Que diable alloit-il faire dans cette galère?*” would have been a fitting epitaph and elegy for me, if I had fallen when engaged upon such an adventure. But I thought that I had now a fair opportunity of, at least, seeing what danger there was, before I put myself in the way of it. I was pretty confident that the Bastille would not fire upon the city deputation, at least without some parley. So I set off under its wing, in the midst of an immense mass of armed

citizens who accompanied it. The far greater part of these was evidently composed of men unused to arms—shopkeepers, tradesmen, and mechanics, who had, by seizing the first weapon in their way, converted themselves into soldiers for the time; but I said to myself that I would for ever give up all pretensions to skill in physiognomy, if they did not, for the most part, bear themselves like the most gallant veterans if matters came to extremities. As the turn-out was perfectly voluntary, no one assumed arms who did not feel within himself the prompting courage to do so; and, accordingly, though of course there was no military regularity or uniformity, I thought I had never seen a more determined-looking set of men than those by whom I was now surrounded. For my own part, I had no ostensible arms but a stout walking-stick, almost worthy of the

denomination of a cudgel; but I carried in my bosom, as I have always done in my similar perambulations, a pistol with a spring-bayonet, to defend myself in case of need.

We advanced down the Rue St. Antoine, at the extremity of which, on a sort of angle from which several streets branch off, the Bastille stands, or I should now, perhaps, more correctly say, stood. When we got to a part of the street where the houses are sufficiently near to it to command a view of what was passing, and yet were not subjected to any very great exposure, I dropped behind in order to see whether I could not obtain entrance into one of them. Most of the houses were, naturally, closed; but there was one, the *premier* of which was a sort of low tavern, which still remained open, in the expectation, doubtless, of profiting by the

vast concourse of people which was thronging by. Into this I entered ; and, after explaining to the very intelligent landlady what was my object, and, also, the reasons why I did not join the crowd, enforcing the whole with a due application of louis-d'ors, I was introduced, by her means, to a washerwoman who lived *au troisième* ; and who, for a certain consideration, permitted me to mount to one of her windows, on condition I would not open the wooden *jalousies* which were closely shut before it. Through the interstices of this I could both see and hear distinctly ; so I accepted her terms readily.

My endeavour was to see what had become of my late companions, the deputation. They had advanced so far that I could no longer distinguish their flag. I could see, however, that the soldiers on the towers reversed their pieces ; and shouldered them

with the muzzle downwards, and the butt in the air. They also displayed a flag of truce. These I conceived, and justly, to be tokens of being willing to parley with the deputation; and the assailants seemed so to regard it also; for their fire slackened considerably, though it did not wholly cease. I was, therefore, not a little surprised, when in the course of about twenty minutes, or half an hour, a shout, the most tremendous I ever heard issue from human lungs, was raised—the attack was recommenced with redoubled fury, and the garrison returned the fire briskly, and with considerable effect.

I have since learned that this was occasioned by mutual jealousies and distrusts, between the governor and the deputation, aided by the excessive noise which prevailed rendering it impossible for the parties to be heard to each other. The garrison, as they

assert, ended by believing the deputation to be a feigned one ; and the deputation, on their part, accuse the garrison of having fired upon them unawares. It appears, however, that the deputation was divided, one party had the flag and drum, and the other not ; and amidst the noise and confusion of such a scene, it was most difficult to know who was who, and what to believe, or whom to trust. It is certain, however, that the deputation finally did not enter the Bastille ; and that, on their departure, the people rushed forward to attack the second bridge, with the utmost eagerness and determination.

Nothing could be more awfully interesting than the scene which now presented itself to me. I had never before witnessed any thing in the nature of an engagement, beyond a sham-fight in Hyde Park, and this alone would have been sufficient to have strongly

impressed and excited me: but the circumstances attending this attack, were immeasurably more memorable than the attack itself, as such. Here was a strong fortress, which had been the terror of all Paris for nearly four hundred years,* now attacked, not by a disciplined and skilful army, but by the very citizens who had hitherto trembled at the bare name of the place, which, untaught, untrained, they were now assailing to its downfall.

I was not, however, at this time, (about three o'clock in the afternoon,) at all assured that they would ultimately succeed. Though

* The two first towers of the Bastille were built, one on each side the, then, Porte St. Antoine, to defend the entrance to the city, in 1370, under Charles V. The other six towers, and the connecting curtains, were built in the reign of his successor, in the year 1380, when the castle assumed its present shape, and the road was turned, as it now exists. Some modern works were added about Henry II.'s time.

the heavy cannon of the place was almost useless, yet its mere defensive strength, in the nature of walls and ditches, rendered it highly improbable that it would be taken by assault; and, as for blockade, which might have been made efficacious, it was manifestly impossible for it to continue long without the place being relieved by external assistance. Neither did the event prove me to be very far wrong, for there was only one man in the garrison killed throughout the day; the place was surrendered, not taken; and the speedy capitulation is universally attributed to the extreme unpopularity of the governor, not only with the prisoners, but with the officers and the troops under his command. It was with considerable difficulty that they were kept to their duty during the attack. But I am anticipating.

The party which advanced upon the second

bridge were repulsed, with considerable loss. I saw several men fall, and, from their being left on the spot, I conclude they were killed outright. A good many others were carried away wounded, and some of them passed close under the window at which I was stationed. The assailants, however, though driven back, did not retreat far, but maintained a continual fire. Few things, indeed, surprised me more, during the day, than the quickness and regularity of the fire of musketry, considering how unpractised the hands were which kept it up.

At a little before four o'clock, they brought three large waggons full of straw, to set fire to the out-buildings. This was the greatest blunder which was committed throughout the affair. The flames thus caused, were far more an impediment to them, than an annoyance to the garrison; and accordingly, the

waggon had not been long on fire, before as strenuous endeavours were made to remove them, as there had previously been to bring them, and place them accurately. I saw one individual dash forward, and, by his unassisted strength and courage, withdraw one of these blazing waggons, which blocked up the approach to the main gate of entrance. This feat excited vast shouts from the assailants; and truly it deserved all praise. A bolder, or a more intrepid action I never beheld. Two others had accompanied this man in his attempt, but they were killed at each side of him. He ultimately succeeded alone.

Some of the corps known by the name of the French guards* now appeared—not to attack, but to assist the citizens. They

* Gardes Françaises; afterwards “La Garde Nationale.”

brought with them six pieces of artillery, among which was a mortar: these began to play upon the place. This was now the critical moment. The crisis had risen to the most enthralling degree of interest; and yet it was at this time that I quitted the scene. I think, moreover, that most others in my place would have done as much. I perceived that although the attack was still kept up by vast numbers, with extreme steadiness and bravery, small parties of two and three began to detach themselves from the outer part of the crowd, and to walk rapidly away in various directions. Many passed up the Rue St. Antoine, and I endeavoured to discover from their conversation what it was that caused this new proceeding. I soon guessed that these persons were not among the bravest of those assembled; for their looks betrayed considerable agitation, and

they continually looked back over their shoulders, till they fairly got out of sight. I was some time before I could divine what new danger had arisen to alarm them, to which they had not equally been exposed throughout the day. I was so high above the street, that I could scarcely catch a word that was said in a conversational tone: at last, one person calling to another at a little distance, informed me of the cause of their retreat, which, I confess, instantly induced me to join to them. It seems that, by some communication from within, it had become current that M. de Launay had declared, that rather than give himself up into the hands of the people, he would set fire to the powder magazine, and blow himself and the Bastille into the air together. This he might do if he pleased, for any thing I cared, if it regarded only himself; but there was known

to be a large quantity of powder in the place, which would have blown up half the Fauxbourg St. Antoine, and all the streets surrounding the Bastille, if it went off at all. This was a serious consideration for me, where I was then situated. So, telling my hostess of what I had heard, I decamped with considerable celerity, and began to retrace my steps towards the Hotel-de-Ville.

I have since learned that the danger was greater than I had, at the time, in fact supposed it to be ; for it was not a mere empty threat, on the part of M. de Launay. He had actually taken up a lighted match, and was proceeding to the powder-magazine, when the sentries prevented his putting his design into execution, by presenting their fixed bayonets at his breast. It is further stated, and I believe with perfect truth, that he summoned a council of the garrison, and stated

to them, that as there seemed no hope of relief from without, and as, from fatigue and reluctance to fire on their fellow-countrymen, their defence was growing slacker and slacker, he saw nothing for it, but to blow up the Bastille and themselves together, rather than put themselves into the hands of the sanguinary populace. The garrison did not, in the slightest degree, coincide with the governor's view of the case: they had not such reasons to fear the effects of unpopularity as he had, and had no more desire to be suddenly sent up to figure in mid-air, than I had myself.

They accordingly took effectual means to prevent his surprising them with the execution of his project; and, after much importunity, persuaded him to allow them to send a flag of truce up to one of the towers, with a drum to beat a retreat. This was

accordingly done. The Parisians, it was probable, had no great knowledge of the different points of war; but of the meaning of a white flag thus displayed, they could not but be aware. They still, however, continued their efforts to enter the place; partly because they feared some stratagem, and partly because their fire from so many different quarters is said to have fallen among each other, and to have been mistaken to have proceeded from the place. Nay, some affirm still, that the fire from the Bastille did not cease; but I think the former version the more probable. The confusion was, naturally, extreme, and the mistake one which might easily arise.

At last, however, they began to perceive that the fire had slackened; and they approached closer to the bridge, still discharging volleys, crying out "Lower the bridge!

—lower the bridge !” At this moment, the officer of the Swiss detachment, whose instigation had powerfully contributed to encourage M. de Launay in his defence, parleyed with the assailants through a sort of loophole which was near the drawbridge. He demanded, in the name of the governor, that the garrison should be allowed to march out with the honours of war. This was peremptorily refused. They then wrote down the terms on which they were willing to surrender,—namely, that they would lay down their arms and give up the Bastille,—in consideration of which, they should receive no personal harm. He added, “ We have 20,000 lbs. of powder in the place ; and if you do not grant us these terms, we will blow ourselves and the whole neighbourhood into the air.” The paper was handed through the same loophole through which he had first spoken. A

large plank was thrown across the ditch, and the same person whom I have already mentioned as having withdrawn the waggon of blazing straw,* passed across, received it, and handed it to an officer of the Queen's regiment, who, strange to say ! had been most active in the attack. This officer, M. Elie, read the paper aloud. The people cried out " Lower your bridge—nothing shall happen to you !" and M. Elie, " We accept your terms, upon the word of an officer (*foi d'officier*)—lower your bridge."

But M. Elie found it impossible to keep the promise he had thus given. The moment the bridge was lowered and the gate opened, the people rushed in, in tumultuous crowds. Acknowledging no commander, they

* This person's name, I am informed, is *Réole* ; he is a mercer, and lives near St. Paul's. He performed many distinguished acts of bravery during the day.

disregarded the capitulation,—they violated every feeling of humanity. It is now that the painful part of the narrative begins. It was impossible, under such circumstances of excitement as I was placed in, not to have the feelings enlisted on the one side or the other. I confess my hopes and wishes had gone along with the assailants:—had they been as merciful after their victory, as they were brave in gaining, I should have had no cause to regret their success.

The Bastille surrendered at about twenty minutes before five o'clock. For about half-an-hour previously to this time, I had left the Rue St. Antoine, and gone to the Place de l'Hôtel-de-Ville, where, as may be supposed, no inconsiderable degree of anxiety and agitation existed. After remaining here some time, I was just beginning to think of turning homeward, when I heard the most

tremendous shouts and yells proceeding from the direction of the Bastille; and two or three individuals covered with dust, and sweat, and blood, came running towards the Hôtel-de-Ville, crying out that the Bastille was taken, and that they were bringing the garrison this way. Accordingly, I soon saw some of the miserable Invalids being dragged along like slaves rather than prisoners, and undergoing every species of contumely and insult. Two of them, I heard, had been hanged in the next street; and when the rest of them were under examination in the Hôtel-de-Ville, the populace kept crying out: —“Give them up to us! that we may hang them!—They have shed the blood of citizens; let us hang them!” But the Gardes Françaises, who, after the surrender, displayed great humanity, interfered in their behalf. They represented that they had only obeyed

the commands of their officers;—that they would have been fired upon by the Swiss troops, if they had refused to obey;—and to sum all, they begged, as the only recompense for their services, to be allowed to save the lives of these soldiers. On such a plea, it could not, at that moment, be denied them; though I question whether their other arguments would have had the desired effect. The Invalids were given into the hands of the Gardes Françaises, who escorted them to their head-quarters at the Hôtel des Invalides.

This was scarcely done when another party drew near with the officers. These did not go into the Hôtel-de-Ville at all; but cried out:—“*A la Grève! à la Grève!*” and proceeded in that direction, dragging their unfortunate victims with them.

A cold shudder came over me. I could

not doubt what their fate would be. The populace seemed drunk with rage;—they yelled forth the most horrible cries of vengeance against the unhappy men who were in their hands; and, as they hurried them along, seemed almost too impatient to postpone their death till they arrived at the spot on which they had determined to inflict it.—This was the common place of execution. They determined that those who had governed the Bastille should die where the vilest criminals undergo the ignominious sentence of the law. I was inexpressibly shocked. The sight of men so shortly to be deprived of life, and that in so dreadful a manner, was sufficient in itself to raise the strongest emotions of terror and disgust;—but I had never previously witnessed any scene at all similar; I had never beheld living men so soon to become inanimate corpses. The effect on me had all the addi-

tional effect of novelty, in addition to its own inseparable horrors.

Yet, notwithstanding that I felt all this, and felt it more strongly than I can express in words, I was irresistibly impelled to go with the crowd, and witness, with my own eyes, how it would all end. I had seen, during that day, many individuals meet death;—but, oh! what difference there is between its being inflicted and suffered “in the trade of war,” and the being massacred by a sanguinary mob, with no one near but enemies, with every eye beaming hatred and rage upon you, instead of those soothing appliances which we need so much at the moment when the spirit takes its awful flight into Eternity. Yet, sick and shuddering as I was, I followed the multitude to the Place de Grève.

M. de Launay, the Governor, seemed to be the object of universal execration. He

not only was the Governor of the Bastille, but he had been individually and peculiarly obnoxious and hated as such. It is said that there would, more than once, have been insurrections of the prisoners, and sometimes of the troops, in the Bastille, if it had not been for the mildness, firmness, and moderation of M. de Losme, his major, who was as much beloved as the governor was detested. But, alas ! this amiable and excellent man was here also ; and no distinction seemed to be made between the fate which impended over both. There were only these two officers who arrived at the Place de Grêve—some had escaped altogether—and two had been killed on the way.

M. de Launay was a man apparently near fifty ; his head was uncovered, and his dress was greatly disordered. His face was the picture of despair. Though a brave man

physically, I doubt not—indeed, his endeavour to blow up the Bastille sufficiently proves this—the horrors of such a death as this seemed almost to have unstrung his nerves. His cheek was deadly white—his eyes were glazed and haggard. In the midst of the most appalling cries, he was dragged to the usual place of execution: a ruffian behind him raised an axe with which he was armed—struck—and the head rolled upon the pavement! It was instantly snatched up, placed upon the end of a pike, and carried off to the Palais Royal.

M. de Losme's fate was different. M. de Launay was just slain, and the crowd were tearing the major, one from another, that each might be the most forward in putting him to death, when a man, apparently about thirty, forced his way through the crowd—threw himself between De Losme and his

nearest assailants, and exclaimed, "Stop! you know not what you do!—you are about to kill the most humane, the most excellent man in the world! I was five years in the Bastille: to his humanity I owe every thing!—all other prisoners would say the same!"

M. de Losme, who seems to have retained his courage and presence of mind in a very remarkable manner, raised his eyes upon hearing these words, and said, "Young man, what are you about to do? Retire—you will only sacrifice yourself, without being able to save me!"

But the Marquis de Pelleport (for so, I have since learned, this generous person is named) would not thus abandon the man to whom he felt cause of gratitude. He perceived that the crowd, literally howling for blood, paid no attention to what he said, —probably did not hear it. But, although

he was unarmed, he flung himself before M. de Losme, and strove to keep off the populace with his hands. He received several wounds, from axes, from sabres, and from bayonets ; at length he seized a gun from the hands of one of those who pressed most upon him, and made the most furious resistance, both for himself and for his friend. At last he was overpowered by numbers, disarmed, and forced at a distance from him. He then urged his way through the crowd, and sank exhausted on the steps of the Hôtel-de-Ville. I strove to get near him, to be of what assistance I could to a man so noble ; but before I could extricate myself from the throng, he had already been removed by his friends. I have since heard he is doing well.

M. de Losme, in this conflict, was overwhelmed with blows ; he fell pierced with

wounds ; and M. de Pelleport has at least the consolation of reflecting that he secured this excellent person from dying, even in outward form, the death of a malefactor.

I have subsequently made inquiries respecting M. de Pelleport. I find that he was imprisoned in the Bastille, some years ago, for a political pamphlet which he had published, and which was obnoxious to the existing government. He was separated from his wife and children, whom he was obliged to leave in distress amounting to penury. A very touching anecdote is told concerning this lady. She had made application, through some of the governors, to have two of her children taken into the military school. One of them determined upon personally investigating the merits of the case, and called upon Madame de Pelleport for that purpose. She was seated in

a miserable room, surrounded by four very beautiful children, who clung to her, and around whom her arms were entwined. Both the mother and the children were in silence and in tears. As soon as Madame de Pelleport saw a stranger, she rose hastily, and retired into another room to compose herself. The general, moved by what he had seen, questioned the children : one of the youngest of them answered, “ *Mamma* says we must all die ; because she has had no money left for these two days, since which we have had no food. We cry because she must die with us.”—This needs, I think, no comment ; but I will add that the general not only complied with the request which had been made to him, but gave her a situation in the school also.

I have since been over the remains of the

Bastille. The workmen are proceeding very rapidly in the work of demolition. . . .

*

It is not true that there were, as it was reported, any skeletons found, or any prisoners chained, or any instruments of torture. The real horrors and atrocities of the place were sufficient both to give rise to, and to render needless, such exaggerations. At the time of the surrender, the Bastille contained only seven prisoners. One of them had been there within three weeks of thirty years! the date of his entrance was on the 4th of August, 1759. One poor creature, from the length of his solitary confinement, has become alienated in his mind. He has so long

* Mr. Blount here enters into an account of some of the antiquities of the Bastille, and into a discussion of the probable result of a more energetic defence; which would scarcely, I think, interest the reader at this time of day. He then continues as above.—ED.

been cut off from all intercourse with his species, that now, that he is restored to it, he has no longer powers to enjoy it.

Thank God! the system of *lettres de cachet* is no more! it never can revive again. It is true that I am not a fellow countryman to this people, among whom it has so long existed; but, at all events, I am bound to them as a fellow-creature; and no one, with a human heart within his breast, can fail to rejoice at the annihilation of so dreadful an engine of secret and silent tyranny. During the last few days, the archives of the Bastille have been open to the public, and the parts of them which have already appeared would, if I were inclined to so odious a task, furnish me with materials for a history, at which human nature would shudder, and which those who live in future times would not believe.

NOTE BY THE EDITOR.

THE letters which, in point of date, should be inserted in this place, are so connected with the story and fortunes of another person, that they would scarcely be intelligible by themselves; and a brief explanation would not be sufficient to make them so. Having also in my hands some further documents on this subject, of which I became possessed through the same channel as of these manuscripts generally,—I determined upon throwing the whole into the form of an independent narrative, inserting only such letters as might fall in with, and advance, the tone and progress of the story. Some parts of it will also tend to the developement of Mr. Blount's character, though the main interest of the piece rests on the feelings and the fate of another.

THE STORY
OF
BLANCH DELVYN.

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OF
BLANCH DELVYN.

CHAPTER I.

“ If marriage should be always the consequence of mutual love, what would become of the prerogative of parents, and their authority over their children ?”

DON QUIXOTE, TRANSLATED BY MOTTEUX.

IN the daily papers of the month of May, 1786, appeared the following paragraph :—

“ MARRIAGE IN HIGH LIFE.

“ Yesterday was married, by special licence, at St. George's, Hanover Square, the Right Honourable the Earl of Montore to Blanch, only daughter of James

Delvyn, Esq. of The Grange, in the county of Kent. The nuptials were celebrated with all the splendour fitted to the high rank and vast possessions of the noble bridegroom, and were attended by all the members of both the families at present in town, as well as by a chosen number of distinguished friends. Before the ceremony, a splendid breakfast was given by Mr. Delvyn ; and, at its conclusion, the happy pair left town in a chariot and four, to pass their honey-moon at the seat of the bride's father, in Kent. The splendour of the equipages and appointments attracted particular notice, as did the dress and extreme beauty of the blushing bride. We understand the bridal veil alone cost a thousand guineas."

Among the numberless paragraphs of a nature similar to the foregoing, which, towards the close of our London seasons, crowd the columns of the fashionable newspapers,—in which every thing is described as radiant with joy, and happiness, and accomplished love,—how many are true? If the altar of St. George's Church could speak,—if it could describe the various tones of agony and suppressed despair in which many of the vows breathed before it are uttered ;—if

the trembling limbs and quivering lips, ascribed to virgin diffidence,—if the tears which are laid to the account of filial or sisterly sensibility,—if all these were traced to their real causes,—if this description were exactly made,—I fear the answer to be given to the question I have proposed would include a fearfully small proportion of the aggregate mass. ‘If St. George’s altar could speak’—alas! how many are there who sigh and shudder at the idea! How many are there who look to the scene which took place there, with wonder at their own nerve, which, prepared as it had been, supported them through its course;—who thank the conventional opinions I have alluded to above, for the protection and shelter which they gave to the emotions which it was impossible wholly to suppress! The ‘Revelations of St. George’s Altar’ would, indeed, be a chapter in the

history of English society, which would lay bare as many pangs of strong suffering,—which would open vistas into as many and as gloomy paths of crime, and its attendant agony and remorse, as do the records of the coarser iniquities and grosser passions chronicled in the calendars of Newgate. The suffering is of a more exalted nature; the crime of a more refined and less revolting cast; but I question whether the guilt can, in strict justice, be considered less. I am very certain that the suffering is, in proportion as it is finer and more polished, more cutting and severe.

There cannot well be in nature two things, so alike in externals, which are so utterly dissimilar in essence and in fact, as a reluctant marriage, and a marriage of mutual affection. In the one, the inward heart rebounds in answer to the outward symbols—it

promises with joy and with truth. The marriage-vow is only an embodying into words of its own fondest and most ardent wishes. The happiness, and the gaiety arising from happiness,—(a feeling so different from mere and common gaiety, that a word ought to be invented to express it,)—are in unison with its inmost feelings, and seem to be caused by them, from their very superabundance and excess. The bride quits a happy home, in happiness, and to greater happiness.

But, the reluctant bride—what a contrast does her heart present! The vow *she* makes seems to her as an insult and a mockery; she swears that she will love a being towards whom her feelings are little short of hate. Bitterness and disappointment rankle within her heart. Every word of the ritual is a step in her progress towards despair. It

closes—and happiness is cut off from her for ever. The altercations relative to the marriage itself, have of late shaken even the early feelings of her filial love, and of her youthful home. The subject began in fear and anxiety; it continued in sorrow and in pain; it has now reached its climax in agony and in despair. How is it that hearts do not burst in the intensity of the conflict?

By what I have said, my readers will readily surmise that the paragraph I have quoted came under the more numerous class,—that the marriage which it recorded and announced was an ill-assorted and unwilling one,—that it began in anguish to one party, and ended in bitterness to both. They would be quite right. The marriage *was* an ill-assorted one; for the characters of those who formed it were wholly dissimilar; their tempers were different; and the attach-

ment (I can scarcely call it love) on one side was repaid, not with distaste merely, but with contempt also on the other. Woe to the marriage in which a disdainful feeling exists on the woman's side!—woe to him towards whom it is felt!—double, treble, tenfold woe to her who feels it!

In Blanch Delvyn this feeling existed, and strongly. Her good qualities and her bad,—her talents, her attainments, her beauty, her warmth of feeling,—all would lead to it alike. If she had had less ardour of sentiment, and less strength of mind, she might probably have been as unhappy; but this feeling of scorn for him she was about to marry, almost for herself, because she was about to do so, would not have existed. She would have been wretched; but pride would not have soured the milk of human kindness within her breast; she would not have had, as she

now had, a sort of feeling of being at war with all mankind. This may appear to be an exaggerated expression; but the sensation of dereliction, of non-community of feeling, which every woman in her situation must experience, becomes in a strong and proud mind the angered and embittered sentiment which I have ascribed to her.

I may almost say, indeed, that a thorough revolution had been operated in her character by the progress and completion of this match. She was a person formed for enjoyment; of a gay temper, as well as of great capabilities of happiness. If she had married a man whom she esteemed and loved, those capabilities would have been called forth and satisfied; and the gaiety and brilliancy of temper would have remained. She was, indeed, originally one of the most fascinating and delightful persons in the world. She

was extremely lovely, though not of a calm or regular style of beauty. She was of shorter stature than the most perfect standard for a woman ; but her form was exquisitely cast, combining lightness, and delicacy of outline, with the brightest and richest filling up. To the gay and buoyant liveliness of youth, she joined an archness, even an *espiéglerie* of manner—a smile lurking in the glance of the eye, and rippling upon the beautiful lip—which betrayed a kind and degree of talent seldom so much developed in such early youth. Yet he who would, from these indications, have deduced that she allowed the deeper and stronger feelings to be drowned beneath the bright and sparkling spray of wit and gaiety, would have been far wrong indeed, in his estimate of her character. On the contrary, she was one of that class of persons—a class much more nume-

rous than is generally supposed—who, being naturally of joyous, elastic, and lively temperaments, give their apparent energies to the light surfaces of things; and yet, who possess, perhaps even more than, certainly as much as, any other description of women, the fire of strong feeling always burning beneath these bright but less ardent coruscations—awaiting only object and occasion to call it into vivid (and to some, unexpected) life. Women of this description are calculated, in a most eminent degree, to give and to experience happiness, if united to a man whom they love, and whom they respect; but they are also calculated to experience and to cause the most extreme misery, if they be bound to a husband whom they dislike, and hold in slight esteem.

That poor Blanch's marriage was ill-assorted, will be sufficiently apparent, when I

say that Lord Montore is universally represented to have been a man of limited parts, of cold sullen temper, and of reserved haughtiness of manner, without either solidity or elevation of character to bear it out. There could not, by possibility, have been found qualities more repugnant than these to the open generous spirit, the warm feeling, and unguarded manner, the lively and ready wit, and the keen strong sense of ridicule, of Blanch Delvyn. She held him lightly for his want of sense; she laughed at him for his pompous assumption of it; she despised him for his narrow and undignified ways of thinking; she hated him for his morose and clouded temper. Was not this marriage ill-assorted?

That it was unwilling on her part—that it took place in direct consequence of the repeated, the incessant urging of her father,

a needy, worldly man,—who loved his daughter warmly when his own interest or ease did not intervene; but who sacrificed her, without a pause or scruple, when they did—consoling himself with the idea, which did not even deceive him, that she had made ‘a great match;’—that her consent to the marriage was wrung from her by his importunities, is apparent throughout all her letters—and, indeed, would seem to have been suspected pretty generally by all who had any opportunity of judging. The following are the expressions of Mr. Blount, who was an eye-witness of the ceremony—they differ somewhat from those of the public account.

“ * * * There were a great many people at breakfast,—too many, I think; but the tone of the whole thing was display and *faste*; which, you know, Lord Montore likes, and Delvyn has no objection to. I

suspect the bride was of my way of thinking on the subject; for she did not eat a mouthful, nor speak a word, and looked like fifty ghosts roused from their graves for judgement. There she sat, with an untouched morsel upon her plate; looking as white as her own veil, and as silent and motionless as a statue. You might almost have taken her for one, indeed, if it had not been for the colour and motion of her fine dark eyes, which spoke—Heaven only knows how many feelings and passions!—Sorrow, and anger, and a little bit of scorn, and a large bit of dislike (hate is not a pretty word) cemented and jointed by something not very distant from despair. Was not this a nice medley for the expression of a bride's eyes, upon her wedding morning? Seriously, I pitied her from the bottom of my heart. It is plain she values that empty, pompous,

sulky lord of her's at his just price; and that, I think, is a sufficient load of unhappiness for the shoulders of nineteen. I had not seen her for a year and a half: she was then the gayest, most agreeable, fascinating creature imaginable;—all animation and fire, a great deal of wit, and an infinity of most varied conversation. Now she looks as if she had become a she-Trappist, and was under a vow never to speak or smile again. If you had but seen the look she gave M., as he handed her into the carriage to go to church, you would have said there was no necessity for her speaking. Any thing so expressive I never beheld; and how Lord M. did not interpret it, is past my comprehension. But that fellow is as impassive and impenetrable as if he were cut out of ice:—it must be the ice of muddy water, you will say,—and 'faith I think so.

“ Well, sir, we went through the streets, all covered with favours; ourselves, and our carriages, and our servants, and our horses; ‘ all very grand and fine,’ as the story-books say. Do you know, I almost feared some explosion during the ceremony; but poor Blanch was too statue-like for any such thing. She was like an automaton, wound up to go through a certain succession of movements, and not able to stir out of the arranged set till it was over. I am sure, she had, by dint of strength of mind, screwed herself and her nerves up to a certain extent of endurance; and endure it she did,—just bowing at the responses, and receiving the congratulations (!) of her friends afterwards also with silent and almost unconscious bows. Whether she fainted on her way down into the country with her bridegroom, or not, as I was not bodkin, I cannot say;—but all went off very

decorously in church ; and ‘ the happy pair ’ were boxed up together in their post-chaise, and off they whirled. I thought, as they drove off, that there had been enough done that morning, to cause a heart-ache hereafter to more than her who feels it now. And yet I don’t know—Blanch has excellent principles ; and I never heard of her having any attachment elsewhere. That would, indeed, have completed it.

“ Delvyn carried it all off swimmingly. He could not but know in his heart, that he was acting the part of Agamemnon, at a sacrifice worse, because more lasting, than that of Iphigenia ; and yet nothing could be more smirking and unconscious, and full of happiness and family *bienséances*, and all the stock paraphernalia and mummary of a happy father.—Pah ! such selfishness and hypo-

crisy really almost sours one with the world, and casts a bitter colouring upon society. D. has not even the excuse of being in love ; which, I suppose, Lord M. would tell you he is—Lord help us !”

CHAPTER II.

“ *Nurse*. Thou wast the prettiest babe that e’er I
nursed :

An’ I might live to see thee marry’d once,
I have my wish.”

ROMEO AND JULIET.

MR. BLOUNT was perfectly right in his conjecture, that it was only by a strong effort of self-command that the bride supported herself through the ceremony which sealed her fate. She had schooled herself to it by preparation and looking onward, that she might not betray any degree of emotion derogatory to the respect she owed herself. She succeeded, as has been shown, in the repression and concealment of these feelings ; but, like the fox of the Spartan boy, they fed

upon her very vitals from the effort. And, when seated in the carriage by the side of her bridegroom,—when to have given vent to the tears, which now almost choked her, would have been a relief for which she would have given worlds,—she still exerted this violent effort of self-control, lest she should expose her weakness before him by whom these sorrows were caused. More powerful than the Danish king in the tradition, she bade the tide of emotion to go no further, and it stayed.

There could not have been selected any place wherein to pass the ‘honey moon’ so little acceptable to Blanch as that to which they were now going. Lord Montore had no place within an easy distance of town, which had caused Mr. Delvyn’s to be chosen. But this had been Blanch’s early home: here she had passed all the happy days of

her life ; the thousand associations and ties of childhood were intertwined with every thing around. The nursery in which she had spent her happy infancy, the “ own room ” in which she had passed her still happier youth,—all the memorials and the effects of her education, and of the enjoyments which she had derived from it—her music, her books, her drawings—all these remained in the apartment which had been her’s, just as they were accustomed to meet her eye on her return home every summer. Alas ! under what different auspices did she return home now ! Home ! it was no longer her home. She was here, now, as a transitory guest,—not in the home of her youth, of her heart. Recollections, it is true, still bound her to it ; but hope was gone for ever. She shuddered to look forward ; she dreaded to look back ; the present afforded no green

spot to rest upon. The waters of unhappiness rose around her on every side, and there was no ark to save her.

Blanch was much beloved at the Grange. She had taken advantage of the opportunities of a *dame de paroisse*, to be the means of extensive benevolence, and, what is still more appreciated by its objects, of personal kindness to the poor of the neighbouring village. Through this village she had now to pass. Its inhabitants had been informed that ‘Miss Blanch’ had made a great marriage, and was coming to spend her newly-wedded days among them. Accordingly, at the extremity of the village, Lord and Lady Montore were met, and preceded through it, by a troop of young girls, scattering flowers before their path, and breathing blessings, both ‘loud and deep,’ upon the bride. The bells pealed out as merrily as the stoutest arms in

the parish could pull them ; the old people came out before their doors, and waved their hats, and cried ‘ God bless her ! ’ as the carriage passed. Every thing was jubilee and joy, except poor Blanch’s heart ;—that was aching and dark indeed.

At first she endeavoured to acknowledge these testimonies of kindness and attachment, by smiles, and bows, and thanks ; but, with every step that they advanced, the effort became more and more painful and difficult, and at last too much for her altogether. Evening was fast closing in—it was something more than dusk, and she took advantage of the failing light to draw her veil close over her face—to throw herself back into a corner of the carriage—and, for the first time giving way to her feelings after the long and harassing day, to weep without restraint, profusely, bitterly.

The circumstances of the moment would, in any case, sufficiently account for her emotion, to her companion;—but the quality of that emotion, the deep sinking of the soul, the dark barrenness of prospect, the feeling, in a word, of despair, which at last overcame her long-preserved composure—these, indeed, he was far from guessing,—he was incapable of estimating at their just severity, if he had guessed them.

It was with these feelings, that Blanch entered the home of her early days. It was the first time that any thing but gladness had arisen from that return. The contrast and its cause pressed on her heavily. That which ought to be the beginning of a new era of happiness to all—which is so, in fact, to many—was to her the closing of that state for ever, and the dawning of a different existence. She was indeed, a ‘Mourning Bride.’ Only

the year preceding, she had been bridemaïd to the chief companion and chosen friend of her youth. That marriage was an happy one;—it was one of fond affection on both sides, and there was no wounded prudence to interfere with the choice of love. The contrast between her marriage and that of her friend had more than once struck her already; she felt this more fully than ever, now that she was in a place where she had enjoyed so much of that friend's society—and where she had witnessed the progress of the attachment, which had ended in an union so happy. She had lamentably felt the absence of the support of this excellent and amiable person during the struggles she had lately undergone. Her friend was abroad with her husband; she had therefore had to support the conflict in her own mind, solely by its own strength, without any sympathy or aid.

The honey-moon — the sweet month—was to Blanch the bitterest of her life. A thousand little circumstances, incidental to the place where it was passed, excited and added to those feelings of gloom and pain, which had no need of extraneous aggravation. The sentiment, hackneyed as the citation of its expression is,*—

“ _____ nessun maggior dolore,
Che ricordarsi del tempo felice
Nella miseria _____ ”

was always present to her;—nay, more; for the very scene of the past happiness was that of the present pain.

It may be supposed that an event like the arrival of a newly-married couple, and of such a couple, gave plentiful employment to

* When a phrase, or a passage, becomes hackneyed by quotation, it is always, I think, in proportion to the justness of the thought, and the felicity of the expression.

the gossips of the village, old and young. The bride was the daughter of 'the Squire'—the bridegroom was a Lord:—what more could be needed to give zest to the conversation commonly incident upon a honeymoon? And yet it *had* additional interest;—for the bride had lived among them from her infancy, and was deeply beloved by all. The young child whom they had petted, had grown in their affections as in years; and admiration, esteem, respect, became mingled with their former love. She had an open hand, and open manner,—which latter quality doubles the former in attractiveness and value. She was ever ready, not only to relieve, but to enter into, to appreciate, to go along with, the sorrows and sufferings of her humble friends. And, what they prized nearly as much—what certainly was of more fascinating, if not of such sterling value

—she was always wont, at seasons of gaiety, to assist, to preside over, during her more girlish years even to mix in,—the festivities of the time. To those of my readers who have ever lived in the country, in England, I need not say how eminently popular (in its best sense) such a disposition was calculated to make her. My other readers may take my word for it. Let them figure to themselves any extent of it, and they will not go wrong.

Of course, it had been the wish and the prayer of the good folks on whose feelings I have been dwelling, that “Miss Blanch should be well married.” Now, as it would seem, she was well married; and she had come to pass her bridal days among them. Many and minute, therefore, were the enquiries which were made in the lower regions of the house, concerning the inmates

above; and great and anxious was the expectation with which the Sunday morning following their arrival was ushered in. Every Sunday had Blanch, in her maiden days, appeared in the family pew; and, after service, had a good-humoured word, or a kind enquiry, for most of the group collected in the church-yard for her to pass. But *this* Sunday she did not appear.

Great was the disappointment, and multifarious were the surmises to which this unexpected circumstance gave rise. On the second Sunday, however, she came. But, as an old dame pithily observed, “ she might as well have stayed at home—for, instead of Miss Blanch’s sweet smiling face, one could see nothing but white lace, bonnet, and veil, and what not; and, after church, instead of the smile to one and the word to another, as it used to be, she only

bowed, bowed, bowed, like the China figure on the parson's mantelpiece:—if this comes of getting married, I think she had better have remained single, for my part.”

Nor was this worthy gossip the only one who felt, if they did not so loudly express, disappointment at the change. The old groom—one of those privileged fixtures, which grow, like inseparable ivy, round the corner-stone and roof-tree of the house—the old groom felt somewhat indignant at his pains being all thrown away in bringing Titania, Miss Blanch's favourite mare, into such superb condition to receive her as My lady. “One might almost see one's face in her coat,” muttered old John despondingly, one morning as he fed his beautiful charge—“one might almost see one's face in her coat, it's so smooth, and so shining, and she's in the finest spirit and condi-

tion that ever was, and yet my lady has never once been on her back. Why, last year, she had been half over the country before she had been here so long. It's a thousand pities ; for no lady in the land has a seat on horseback to compare to her !”

But there was one, an old servant at the Grange, to whom the feelings of all the rest towards their young mistress were but as a shadow—this was *the nurse* ! ‘ The nurse !’ what a crowd of recollections cluster, in every bosom, round that name ! It is, as it were, the ball round which all the threads of early feeling and affection are winded. That heart must indeed have been hardened by the current of the world, which does not soften at the remembrance of its nursery days ! How often do we paint to ourselves the quaint and antiquated figure which answers to that name in our memories respec-

tively!—and, with a mingled smile and sigh, think of her indulgence, and her fondness, and her authority so often rebelled against, and her stories so often repeated, yet still so eagerly asked for and listened to,—in short, of all that cloud of atoms, small in themselves, and unregarded at the time, but which in riper years forms one of the chief, and certainly one of the purest and the best of the treasures of our heart's memory! I never should feel any respect for that heart in which such feelings had no existence.

But the feelings on the other side are always far stronger and deeper. They are probably the most powerful, short of maternal love, which exist in the human bosom. In England, it is true, the feeling of fosterage is by no means so strong as it is among the Scotch, and the Irish especially. Among the

latter, indeed, I question whether it does not sometimes exceed even the love of offspring itself,—extreme as, in those ardent natures, that affection always is. In the present instance, however, the foster-feeling was of an intensity by no means common. Blanch had been old Sarah's only nursling in the family. Being an only child, her undivided care and love had been devoted to her; and, as Mrs. Delvyn died during her daughter's infancy, the minor duties of maternity had devolved upon, and been fulfilled by her nurse. She had been her attendant, indeed, till about two years previous to the period of which I am speaking; when the late hours of a London season necessitated Blanch to have some one about her younger and less infirm than poor old Sarah had now become. She was, therefore, settled in a cottage, stored with every comfort, within a quarter of a mile of the

house; and if there be any truth in the description I have given of Blanch's disposition, I need not say how constant a walk it was to "Nurse's Cottage."

Every year when Blanch went to town, the old woman blessed her at parting; and, in true accordance with the spirit of the dear old sisterhood, her chief, her first, her last wish was always the same, and expressed in very nearly the same words, as that which I have quoted as the epigraph to this chapter.

Sarah's wish was now accomplished. She had seen her young mistress, her 'child,' as she was accustomed to call her, and to feel towards her,—she had seen her married, and greatly, and nobly. Yet I question whether, after a short time, she would not rather have repealed its accomplishment, had so doing depended on her will. With that gift of intuition which women, especially of her age

and office, have into such matters, she had not seen her young lady thrice, before she was convinced that her feelings towards Lord Montore were not, and never had been, those of love. Of course, both the good sense and good taste of Blanch induced her to avoid the subject, with Sarah, as much as was possible. But at such a time, and with one who stood in the position to her which Sarah did, it was not possible to do so entirely : and what she did not say was fully as influential as what she did, in guiding the keen-sighted old woman to her conclusion.

A visit which the bride and bridegroom paid her together, after they had been at the Grange a few days, sufficed to remove any doubt, if indeed any remained. I cannot say that Sarah was at all prepossessed in Lord Montore's favour. It is probably a very unfair feeling, but it is one which un-

doubtedly exists, especially in women, to have but slender esteem towards a slighted lover—and, bridegroom as Lord Montore was, Sarah regarded him in that light. He addressed a few sentences to her, which were meant to be gracious; but they lacked that freedom and kindliness of tone and manner, which throw completely out of view all appearance, of the consciousness at least, of condescension. Now Lord Montore seemed so perfectly aware of the extent to which he was condescending, that he ceased to be at all so in fact.—The shew killed the reality. Still Sarah could not but feel strong *interest*, if nothing else, towards one in whose hands Blanch's fate was placed. That which was to her the dearest, the most valuable, the best of all created things, was indissolubly bound to the man who stood before her. He, then, was the husband for whom she had so prayed for her

dear lady ! Oh ! that he might be *such* a one as she had prayed for. “ My lord,” said she, “ you are the most fortunate man in the world ; it is your own fault if you are not the happiest also. You cannot know, my lord, as yet—*no one* can know, as I do, what a treasure you have gained in my dear, dear child ! Her heart and her temper, my lord, I know even better than she does herself ; they have not their equals in this world. I shall look to you, my lord,” continued the old woman, assuming the playful authority to which her age and former station entitled her—“ I shall look to you, my lord, for my child’s happiness :—you have a great trust ; I hope you are conscious of it, and worthy of it : but you must be both, or Miss Blanch would not have married you. God bless you together !”

The old woman used to tell the story of

this visit afterwards; and she used to add: “I thought, at the time, the match would never turn out well; for my lord did not seem half to deserve her, and value her as he ought to do:—and for her, poor thing! while I was speaking, she kept fondling and kissing my little grandchild:—and when they went away, I found the little girl was all wet with tears—and *she* had not been crying, I know.”

CHAPTER III.

“ ————— Her feelings may be better
Shewn in the following copy of her letter.”

BYRON.

MY readers must, I am sure, have anticipated, to use old Sarah's words, that “ the match could never turn out well.” They will, I doubt not, expect the next act in the drama of *Marriage à-la-Mode* ;—disgust and repulsion on one side—wooing, fondness, attraction on another—the struggle between duty and passion—between unassisted principle and a tempted heart—the declining effort—the ultimate fall.—all these things, I doubt not, my readers expect now to find detailed in full. If they do so expect, their

expectation will be balked. Among the letters before me, there are many which relate to this portion of Blanch's life; but I shall not give one of them, nor the substance of one of them. It is not my purpose to set forth the sophistry of the lover—sophistry, indeed, which, from the unalterable nature of the case, is and must be so light and frail, that one breath of common sense would blow it into the air; but which, nevertheless, so constantly remains unshattered, from its being the wish and endeavour of the party to whom it is addressed to be deceived;—of this I shall not give one word. Neither shall I represent the more dangerous temptation arising from the contrast between indifference, coldness, harshness—and the fond, fervent, devoted, unremitting attention and wooing, which were opposed to them. My purpose in giving to the world this

story is, not to furnish excuses for guilt, or to picture the enjoyments of its indulgence. On the contrary, it is to present the reverse of the picture—a reverse always certain and often speedy—to shew the result of guilt, even as to temporal happiness, and in a case like this, where some palliating circumstances may fairly be said to have existed. The very means and agent of the fault are the means and agent of the retribution;—truly, “the crime carries the punishment along with it.”

The reader, therefore, will please to suppose about two years and a-half to have passed since the honey-moon of which I have presented the opening to him, in the previous chapter. He will suppose that period to have witnessed those gradations and changes to which I have made brief allusion above. With these impressions, he will be able to understand, without farther preface, the fol-

lowing letter. It is addressed by Blanch to that friend of whom I have already made mention; and, as a brief and yet full exposition of her feelings on the most important incident of her life, I prefer giving it as it stands, to transposing its substance into my own words:—

“ Paris, 1788.

“ You must, before this time, my dear Margaret, have become acquainted with the step I have taken. Its causes can need but little explanation to *you*. You have known them long. You have even forewarned me of their present effect. I cannot, however, leave my country for an indefinite period, probably a long one, without seizing the earliest occasion of writing to you, who are almost the only person whom I regret to leave there. Dear Margaret, the recollection of the sepa-

ration which the course I was pursuing would, in all probability, cause me from you, operated as a check and a chill upon my heart, at the moment I had determined upon adopting it. But having taken my determination, I acted upon it at once. You know, I am not very apt to delay in the one, when once I have made the other. Do not think, however, that I acted without consideration: I may have determined and done wrongly; but certainly, neither hastily nor blindly. I knew all that I must sacrifice, and yet the sacrifice is made. Oh, Margaret! how little did I, at one time, think that such a sacrifice would ever have been needed from me!—how little did I think that my fate would be what it has been!—but the die is cast—and it is not I alone that have thrown it for myself. My father—but I will not speak of him now. I rejoice he has not lived to see this; for

what would his reproaches to his own heart have been!

“The wretchedness I have undergone for the last year passes expression—I *have not* expressed it, even to you. Constant dissensions from petty and mean causes; a coarse mind displayed in coarser manners; such was the picture of my home; such was he to whom I was linked—to whom, thank Heaven! I am linked no longer. He is a rich man, he is a man of rank—for this my father chose him; he is a man of no feeling, of small sense, and less education; of low tastes and habits; of sullen and obstinate manners; of contracted and cold heart; for this I loathed him—for this I have left him for ever!

“I never loved him; I never could have loved him; but if I could but have esteemed him, though ever so little, I should have been contented. Nay, if I could even have felt

towards him that kindliness which mere good-nature always excites, he never would have had reason to complain of my conduct towards him. Whatever feelings I might have had to repress—whatever temptations I might have had to struggle against, I *would* have repressed them ; I should have prevailed in the struggle. But the heart and the temper of this man were as unfeeling and as clouded, as his mind was coarse and mean. What hope could there be (happiness I do not take into the account, but) of peace with such a man? If he had possessed either good sense or good feeling, the one might, in some degree, have compensated for the absence of the other ; but, equally destitute of both, there was no help nor hope indeed. Heaven can bear me witness, that, on our marriage, after the first agony of disappointment and despair was past, I tried to make

the best of my fate and of his. But I found no one spot, in either his mind or his heart, whereon to build: all was equally barren, inhospitable, and desolate. He knew that my consent had been wrung from me by my father; he knew that I had never misled him as to my sentiments, or as to my opinion of his. It was he, he alone, who had caused this marriage, so hateful to me; and yet he resented my having married him without loving him, as though it had been my own free choice and deed.

“One aggravation of my lot, I was, however, spared; I did not become the mother of that man’s children. I shudder when I reflect upon its having been possible. I almost believe it would have destroyed the strongest feeling of nature, maternal love, of which I feel the capability so powerful within me: I almost believe it would have destroyed this,

if he had been the father of my child ! At all events, the conflict between the opposite feelings would have been extreme. You can scarcely conceive—you, who are so blessed in *your* home—how much I dreaded it ; how thankful I am for having been spared it.

“ Of the choice I have now made I need not speak to you. You saw the commencement of our attachment ; you warned me against its increase. Had you, my kind and constant Mentor, remained in London, I know not how it might have ended. As it is, I cannot wish it had ended otherwise. Were the step to take again, I would take it. The regret which cuts me to the heart is, that we did not meet sooner—that, before we met, I was forced into that accursed—(I can use no milder phrase)—into that accursed marriage.

“ Our present plans are to remain at this

easy distance from England, till the bars which are still between us shall have been removed. We have reason to hope this will be in a short time. We shall then, probably, proceed on our travels. Meanwhile, write to me; I am sure you *will* write to me, dear Margaret. I shall, indeed, be anxious till I see your dear hand-writing once more."

Such was the letter which this unhappy, misguided creature wrote to her dearest friend, on her elopement from her husband's house. I need scarcely warn my readers against supposing that I concur in its self-blinding sophistry. I only set before them her own statement of her own conduct, and its motives:—its consequences have yet to be told. Poor Blanch! she indeed deceived herself—she looked only to one

side—to what she would escape from, not to what she would have to endure. She was exactly the woman to whom the consequences of such a step would be the most bitter. The very strength and pride of her spirit would make them so the more. The slights and scorns of the world are in a ten-fold degree galling to those who despise it; nay, in the very proportion in which that contempt is strong and sincere, is the feeling of humiliation at being condemned and shunned by the very objects which excite it. And the world, in such cases, makes no distinctions; it draws no lines; it will see no differences. Indeed it cannot see (and it would not care to do so, if it could) the peculiar circumstances in any individual case. It knows only what is done; and not what has led to the doing. The ultimate act is apparent to all; the propelling and

palliating causes are hidden from all—except from those whose hearts would have guessed them without it. In Blanch's case—but I will not forestall the current of my story.

I do not purpose to set before my readers any thing relating to the period which immediately followed her divorce, and second marriage. It was, probably, since her first, the happiest she had known. How long this happiness lasted, and what caused it to cease, will be seen in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

“ My peace is vanished,
My heart is sore.”—FAUST.

[The following are the letters of Mr. Blount to which I alluded in the note prefixed to this story. They are dated in the summer subsequent to that in which the last extract from his Diary was written.]

“Spa, August —, 1790.

“ MY DEAR FREWIN,—

* * * *

“ WHO do you think is here? One of whom you have often heard me speak with strong admiration and deep pity; whose qualities formerly seemed to me so fascinating; whose fate has inspired me with such painful inte-

rest. In a word, on my arrival here, almost the first names I saw in the subscription book were those of Mr. and Mrs. Lumley ! I doubted at first whether or not I should go and see them. I had always had a sort of lounging London acquaintance with him : how well I knew *her* some few years ago, you are fully aware. At first, I feared that she might not like to see, in her present situation, a friend of her early years, and that it was better to avoid the painful reminiscences which the renewal of such an acquaintance could not fail to occasion. But again, I thought, that as she certainly would know that I was here, she might believe that I shunned her in her fallen state from those cold, heartless motives, which have given rise to the proverb, “A friend in need.” I have no wife either, the necessary consideration for whom might restrain me from act-

ing as good feeling would naturally prompt ; so I went to see Lumley and his wife.

“ It is now about five years since I first knew her. I passed some weeks, in the summer of 1785, at her uncle's house in the country ; and you know how rapidly acquaintance ripens into intimacy in such society. This was the year before she married ; but Lord Montore was also there, and, though it was quite evident she hated him, I saw how it must end. Her father was in embarrassed circumstances, and Montore was rolling in wealth ; and it was plain that she would be another sacrifice to Mammon. This perhaps gave her additional interest in my eyes ; but she was abundantly interesting without any such extrinsic aid. She was of a bright French style of beauty, with the most sparkling gipsy eyes that ever were seen—coal-black hair flying in every direc-

tion over her deep clear cheeks, and a mouth where the very spirit of archness and buoyancy seemed to have chosen his home. And yet there was an occasional cloud passed over the sunshine of her countenance—"a dark hour," or rather a dark moment, which, while it now and then lessened the vividness, added vastly to the interest, of her beauty. As the French say, *elle avait de l'esprit comme un demon*—her wit flashed always with brilliancy, and often with keenness, or perhaps rather, to use another French word, with *malice*. But, in conformity with the beautiful index of her mind, at times a touch of true nature and feeling would send the tears springing to her eyes, and a sigh struggling to her throat, which shewed that all this gaiety and brightness covered, but did not destroy, sentiments, or the capability of sentiments, far warmer and deeper,—that

this lovely casket was not without its jewel of price—a heart.

You can well understand that such a being was calculated strongly to impress a very young man, such as I then was; and there were additional circumstances which added to these natural causes. In the first place, I thought that few or none of those around her *understood* her as I did. They seemed to regard her merely as a gay glittering creature, calculated to shine in worldly society; or, if some of them had any higher idea of her, it was merely on account of the wit which they had felt, and consequently dreaded. I, on the other hand, saw, as I have said, the existence and the value of her less apparent qualities; which gave me a sort of self-satisfaction with my own sagacity, and for which (as I did not fail to let it appear to her) she felt flattered and

gratified. The northern coruscations which exist only in the coldest atmosphere, and the summer lightning which springs from heat, are to the unpenetrating eye almost undistinguishable from each other: what most thought belonged to the frozen zone, I clearly saw was caused by far warmer temperature. But, notwithstanding all this, I was *not* in love with her; and, in despite of vanity, I well knew that she was not in the least so with me. The truth is, that at that time I had “other tow on my distaff,”—I was in love with somebody else, and she was aware that I was so. This caused me to know her far better—I may almost say it made me more intimate with her—than if there had been the blindness of love on my side, and the embarrassment of love on her’s. She saw that I appreciated, esteemed, and valued her; she knew that the attention I paid her

was totally free from selfishness, and she was more frank and trusting to me, in consequence, than it would otherwise have been possible for one of her sex and age to have been to one of mine. I certainly *should have been* in love with her, if it had not been for the particular circumstances to which I have alluded; and she was quite conscious of this, which served to add cordiality to the unreserve of our intercourse. We used to take long walks and rides, in which she was *entiers* with — and me. I believe she was the only person in the world who would not have been *Madame de Trop* to both of us. It was at these times chiefly, that those indications of deeper thought and feeling would break forth. Speaking in general terms, she would inveigh with all the bitterness of anticipated misery on what I plainly saw she meant would be her own lot. Then again

she would pass her hand across her brow, and tossing back her floating hair, as if in so doing she shook these gloomy thoughts from her, as a horse flings the water from his mane, she would burst forth with all the wildness of *spurred* spirits (if I may so speak) into some of her gayest and most brilliant flights—as if the sky-bird could foresee its being encaged, and soared more loftily in the air to enjoy it to the full, while it *was* free.

“ I never have seen her but once since ; and that was at her marriage with Lord Montore. From what I have said, you will readily conceive that I was more pained than surprised when I heard it was about to take place ; and again, I was more pained than surprised when I afterwards heard of her elopement and subsequent divorce. I say that I was not strongly surprised at this last occurrence, not from there being the slightest

degree even of levity in her conduct or manner, still less in her mind, but because I thought that she too nearly resembled the simile to which I have likened her above—the wild bird of the heavens—not to break through a cage, which to her, I well knew, would be insupportable. It would have indeed caused me the very greatest surprise if I had heard of her being guilty of any misconduct, and that she remained with her husband; for I was certain that whatever might be her errors and her faults, concealment and hypocrisy would never rank among them.

“ I went, accordingly, to call on the Lumleys. When I entered the room, he advanced towards me, and took me by the hand; feeling, apparently, grateful for my coming at a moment, and in a place, where they were in a certain degree shunned. He did not

say this, however, in direct terms, but his manner, I thought, indicated it ; for it had that grace and suavity which no one knows how to assume better than himself when he chooses ; but which he by no means always, or even generally, *does* choose to assume. In the mean time, she had risen from the sofa, on which she was sitting, and had come forward a step or two to meet me. She wore a large bonnet, with lace hanging down from the edge, which partly overshadowed her face ; but, as I fixed my eyes upon her, she glanced at me one look, and much, indeed, did it speak. It seemed as if in that moment the retrospect of years passed across her mind—that she thought of her state when she knew me last—of the intervening time—of her present condition—and as if she knew that the same train of thought must be then in *my* mind also, and entreated me to judge

her kindly, and to spare her. It takes long to describe, even imperfectly as I have done it, the concentrated expression of that look; but it was the work of a moment. It passed away as suddenly as it had appeared; and as she stretched out her hand to me, she smiled brightly, and spoke fluently, to welcome an old friend. But this was only the lip-greeting; the other was the recognition of the heart.

“ I found her a good deal altered, and yet not as I had anticipated she would be. I thought she would have been pale and sunken, and that her wild spirits would have been changed into debility and sadness. But it was not so. Her person, undoubtedly, was wasted; but, instead of yielding to this, she concealed, in great measure, by the little arts of dress in which women are so skilled, the work of grief upon her beautiful form.

Her cheek was a little fallen in, but there was a delicate tint of rouge, which prevented its paleness from being apparent, and yet was too slight, and too skilfully applied, to show that it was strongly needed. There were some points, however, which spoke more plainly. The lips were thin, and had lost both their colour and freshness; and the eye, —true revealer, let what will be said, of the mind,—showed, like the surface of water, the clouds which passed over the spirit; and when it did flash and shine, it was plain that it was by effort, not spontaneously.

“She talked much, and with great liveliness; but said nothing of old times. She spoke of Spa, and its rides, and its waters; and where they had been to on the Continent, and where they were going to—of Italy, of Germany, of the Rhine.—In short, her conversation would have been indicative

of gaiety and enjoyment, had it not appeared that she feared to pause lest remembrance should intrude—that by unceasing talking of the present she hoped to exclude the past. I could not help thinking, also, that she stood in great fear of her husband. She looked towards him once or twice, as if in dread lest he should think that she was committing herself, and that she would suffer severely for it, as soon as they were alone. He was extremely civil and even courteous to me; but there was, in his general manner, a strong tinge of moroseness exceedingly perceptible, which, as I had heard, and, indeed, partly had seen, was inherent in his disposition, and now seemed aggravated by the circumstances of their situation. I should not have thought Lumley a man much calculated to have gained the affections of one like her; but having once done so, I can very

well understand that his influence over her would be great. He is a fine dark-looking man, but his eye has a sternness which is even unpleasant, and there is an expression about his mouth which plainly bespeaks ill-temper. At the same time, he is undoubtedly a person of a powerful and cultivated mind; and I can perfectly conceive that it might be extremely seductive to a brilliant and sensitive creature, such as she was, to perceive his haughtiness of manner changed towards her into a softness and deference, which are doubly effective when practised by one to whose ordinary manners they are foreign. But, however this might have been, it is certain nothing of the kind exists now. He spoke to her once or twice with a sharpness evidently restrained only by my presence; and I could see her shrink, when he fixed his eye upon her, in a manner which

shewed how much she dreaded his severity—I fear I ought to say, unkindness.

“ When I went away, she again shook me cordially by the hand, and hoped that we should meet often while I stay here ; and L. expressed himself to the same effect, graciously enough. To-day I received from him an invitation to dinner next week ; and I certainly shall go, for I truly am deeply interested concerning her. I fear she is very unhappy. There never was a woman in her situation, who was not more or less so ; but I am afraid that she has none of those consolations and alleviations of her fate, which spring from the fondness and devotion of him for whom she has incurred it. Of all women, I should think her the least able to bear a lot like this. With such ardent affections and keen feelings, it must, indeed, be *dreadful* to meet with unrequital, “ after

all that has come and gone." But, perhaps, I am doing him injustice. What I saw may be merely the effect of temporary ill-humour; and the disposition to generalize, of which you have so often accused me, may have led me into giving it more importance than is fairly its due—I hope it may be so.

* * * *

CHAPTER V.

As the pure mountain air becomes too pure
For feeble lungs to breathe, so the sick heart,
In its poor sensitiveness, cannot endure
To look on Nature in her pride:—the smart,
Which the great healer, Time, alone can cure,
Shrinks from those sights of grandeur, which impart
To healthful spirits, joy, and peace, and love
For fellow-man, and rev'rence for Above!

ANON.

MY readers are, by this time, sufficiently well acquainted with Mr. Blount to see what a very dangerous feeling such pity as his must have been towards a woman like Mrs. Lumley. And that pity was much increased as he came to mix more in her society. He found that his anticipations were but too true, or rather that they had fallen far short of the

reality. After a little time, he began to live with the Lumleys a great deal. L., as it seemed, was wearied with the seclusion in which they were, in a degree, compelled to live; for, of course, they were not visited by married people; and the men who would willingly have come, were not always exactly those that he chose to receive. He felt this a good deal; and it caused, very much, that fretfulness and moroseness which speedily became undoubtedly apparent. He had been accustomed to live in society—he had shone in it; and had enjoyed, as much as any man, the *successes*, to use a French idiom, though not a French word, which he had met with there. When, therefore, his marriage secluded him from it, and the first flush of passion, which for the time repaid him, had passed away,—he began to feel, and then to show that he felt, the sacrifice he

had made ;—for he wanted *heart*. I say that he wanted heart; for, gracious Heaven! what must that man be who shews that *he* feels his petty sacrifice, if it deserves to be called so, to her who has abandoned *all* for *him*! But so it was; and poor Blanch was, of all women, she who would feel it the most. This, indeed, became soon manifest.

Mr. Blount became, as I have said, a constant guest at the Lumleys', and Blanch and he renewed their former intimacy. It is true, they spoke little, in direct terms, of the time they had passed together; but as they named the mutual friends who had contributed to render that period such a happy one, the mind could not fail to revert to the days themselves. Retracing together, at a comparatively distant period, former intercourse,—is a far stronger tie of union than even the intercourse itself was at the time;

or than its recollection would primarily seem to justify. But so it is: it is a point of community which makes the present intimacy greater than that which is its subject and its cause. And thus it was in the present instance.

It is the custom at Spa to hire the mountain-ponies of the place, and take long rides through the beautiful environs, over the stony roads of which these little creatures make their way with a security and rapidity which our English horses could not master on such ground. Mr. Blount used frequently to ride in this way with Lumley and his wife. By degrees, Mr. Lumley began to remain at home, well pleased, as it would seem, to be a free man for a few hours, and contented that she should go under their friend's guardianship. These *têtes-à-têtes* were, at first, rather irksome to both parties; but after

one or two of them had passed over, they became not only unembarrassed, but delightful. It almost seemed as if they had retrograded to the happy times when they were friends before, and that the clouds and storms of the intervening time had passed away, as though they had never been. But they *had* been: passion had been busy with the hearts of both of them; and shame, likewise, had mingled largely in her lot.

The country around Spa is beautiful; it is also of a very peculiar character. It consists, for the most part, of steep and abrupt hills, wanting, it is true, the height, but still having, in great measure, the character, of mountains. They are, generally, clothed with wood, and abound in little valleys, or rather "laps of land," with a pebbly brook brawling through the bottom, and bordered by narrow stripes of smooth green turf, in-

tervening between it and the wood. The paths which intersect this country are small and tangled, as wood-paths usually are; but, perhaps, on the very account of their gloom and boundedness, they give greater effect to the bursts of splendid prospect on which you frequently emerge, and even to the still, green, basins, if I may thus use the word, of which I have spoken. An air and a feeling of solitude, without desolation, reign among these hills, which are peculiarly soothing and softly impressive. The breath of Nature awakens her delicate echoes in the heart, and ripples, but does not agitate, its surface. In scenes of sterner and more vast character, the pressure on the mind is of a sort from which many of us seek to escape; for none but hearts of the most perfect peacefulness and purity can *bear* to meet and to analyze the sensations which are there inspired.

But in places of more gentle beauty the moral effect is of a correspondingly milder character. The calls for feeling are less strong and deep, and need, consequently, less *command* of heart (if I may thus speak) to answer them.

It was through such scenes that their rides commonly lay ; and latterly, as I have said, they were nearly always alone. Lumley's tastes were not at all of this kind, and he seemed happy to have one to take his *task* off his hands. It is strange that he did not perceive what a very dangerous arrangement this must be for all parties ; but I imagine that selfish people see nothing beyond the gratification of their own immediate convenience, and are blind, and, therefore, indifferent, to what may be the eventual consequence. For Mr. Blount, it is very possible that he might see the danger, but he turned his eyes from it,

as men are always apt to do from any disagreeable truth. The fact, if it must be spoken, was that, by this time, he had begun to feel his former (ay, more than his former) interest and delight in Mrs. Lumley's society; and, alas! how difficult it is to deny ourselves these things when they are thus offered to the taste.

But I will let him speak for himself: all description of feeling is, and must be, cold and imperfect, in comparison with that in the mouth of him whose feelings are described:—

“Our intimacy, by degrees, became perfectly renewed. She was still, in her best moments, very much what she had ever been. It is true that her spirits were, at the first, nearly always forced; but then, as all who have been under the necessity of forcing their spirits well know, this leads, in a short time,

to a real flow, if not of true gaiety of heart, at least of real cheerfulness of manner; as those who excite themselves by wine, raise their vivacity by an artificial stimulant; but the vivacity so raised, is, for the time, real. But her dark hours were now more frequent and continued; the oppression of leaden and gnawing unhappiness weighed upon her, worse, far worse, than the most violent agony of spirit—for that must be short-lived in proportion to its violence. The one is like the bitterness of an inflicted death; the other is like the ‘merciless mercy’ of changing that death into perpetual imprisonment.

“ Thus did her soul seem sinking in the thralldom of enduring sorrow. The almost inexhaustible buoyancy of her nature, aided by the youth she still possessed, made her struggles to throw off this moral incubus frequent, and for the time effectual. It was

during such moments especially that she reminded me of her former self. One token of the uncontaminated goodness and amiability of her heart was, that, after all she had undergone, the turn and quality of her wit were in no degree made more acrid. This is, indeed, most rare; for scarcely ever do we find a person possessing strong powers of wit, who has undergone suffering,—still more, suffering which includes disgrace,—who is not soured and virulent, as it were, in revenge. But it was in no degree so with her. Her vivacity was at times even playful, though that playfulness would be immediately clouded and saddened by a shade passing over the brightness of her eyes,—by a sigh being checked just as it had become perceptible.

“ As, however, we grew more familiar and unreserved, her endeavours to assume

gaiety very visibly relaxed. She gradually made less and less exertion to conceal the real state of her mind ; and, though she never actually spoke of her sorrows, yet the tone of her conversation, and the complexion of her topics, became sadly assimilated to her situation. I thought too, as I closely watched her in Lumley's presence, that her fear of him, which was at all times apparent, was sometimes mingled with an expression as much of angry and even indignant reproachfulness, as it was with love. It is very certain that, with a proud woman, such conduct as I every day more and more plainly perceived his to be, will at last destroy even the warmest and fondest affection. Such constant wounds to the just self-appreciation of such a woman, will, in the end, dispel that illusion of love, which prevents these things being viewed in their

true light. There is no woman who can bear slight; still less is it to be borne by one of high qualities and gifts, who has incurred guilt and degradation for the sake of him who slights her.

“One day, after I had been about a month at Spa, I was out with her on one of the rambles I have described. Lumley had been more than usually cold and careless in the excuse which he made for not accompanying us; and, as we parted from him, I saw a flash of mingled indignation and despair gleam for a moment in her dark bright eyes. When she set off, however, she seemed, by a sudden effort, to shake away the feelings which had been excited; and her conversation became more animated, rapid, and even eloquent, than I had almost ever before heard it. But it was also more evidently *unreal*. Her cheek became flushed

with what may be termed a lurid, rather than a brilliant, red ; and her eye was lighted up with an almost unnatural fire. Both her appearance and manner betokened that false and feverish state of mind, which seeks refuge from pain by a forced, forcible, and unremitting direction of its powers to indifferent and extraneous subjects. By 'unremitting' I mean that hurried and unnatural passing from topic to topic, which you must have often witnessed in such circumstances, and which seems to be occasioned by a dread that the slightest, even a moment's, pause would at once throw back the mind under the control of that one feeling from which it is using such violent efforts to escape. But not the conversation only, but the whole bearing and demeanour of persons thus influenced, are abrupt, startling, and (I must repeat the word) unreal.

Thus, after we had gone some way, whilst she was in the midst of a most animated conversation,—quite on a sudden, and without the slightest notice to me,—she struck off nearly at full speed, and continued, in despite of the difficulties of the ground, to ride at that pace till a very precipitous declivity obliged us at last to pull up.

“ As we went down the hill, her saddle became loose, fastened, as it was, with the miserable tackle of the country ; so, when we got to the bottom, I lifted her off her horse, that I might re-adjust it. The valley into which we had descended was one of the most beautiful of those spots of enclosed solitude of which I have endeavoured to give you some idea.* While, therefore, I was

* It will be seen that the earlier portion of this chapter, though given in the third person, was taken directly from Mr. Blount's Correspondence. ED.

busied with her horse, she sat down on the green bank of the stream, which formed almost a natural throne; and, when all was ready for her again to mount, she said she was tired, and would rest there before she went on. I tied the horses to a tree, and sat down beside her.

“ I never saw her look so beautiful as she did at that moment. The excitation of her false spirits had passed away; but the flush of the cheek remained, as if to give brightness to a picture that would otherwise have been too gloomy and uncoloured. The eye, indeed, spoke the re-action which had taken place within; and an air of mingled pain and listlessness pervaded the whole of that speaking countenance. Her riding-hat was partially thrown back, and her dark hair (to which the exercise had given that half-curved flowingness, which is so much more

graceful than its appearance when accurately dressed) floated over the warm cheek, brought out in strong relief by that tint of crimson beauty. As I seated myself by her side, I was, I own, sufficiently moved by these appearances. The *locale* also was well suited to give additional effect to such sensations. The sun had begun to decline, so that the whole of the narrow valley was in shade. The day had been intensely hot; and the contrast of the coolness and repose of this lovely and lonely spot sank deliciously upon the senses, and through them upon the heart. It seemed, indeed, like a green palace of refreshment and of rest, shut out by the wooded hills from the hot and garish world without.

“We sat for some time in silence—I was gazing on her, and she was gazing on the water, as it bubbled past her feet. But she

was conscious of my gaze. On a sudden, she said,—‘ Do you remember that evening when we stood together by the brook, in the grounds at M——?—But we were not alone *then*—Julia was with us.”—She fixed her eyes upon me as she spoke, and I believe that, long as I have given up blushing, I coloured a little; inasmuch as this was by no means the exact recollection which I wished to raise in her; but I answered that I remembered it perfectly.—‘ And do you remember our conversation also?’

“ ‘ Yes; I recollect likening you to the stream—springing and glancing in the bright sun, and giving life and freshness to the whole scene through which it passed.’

“ ‘ Ah,’ she added, ‘ and I completed the parallel. I said it was like me, because the rocks which struck and bruised its bosom were the very causes of its motion and glitter-

ing;—I said it was like me, because, after being tended and adorned, and having every aid and adjunct bestowed upon it while it was of service or embellishment to the rich man's domain,—it was allowed to glide away amid thorns and difficulty, and darkness, the moment his end was answered. Alas!—little did I think at that moment how awfully my prophecy would be fulfilled!—I knew that a dark fate awaited me, but I could not expect *this*—I expected unhappiness, but not guilt—I awaited sacrifice, but not shame—and now!——’ She stooped her head upon her hands, and the gushing tears sprang through the interstices of her fingers, the veins of which seemed darkened and swollen almost to bursting.

“ I paused during the first burst of agony ; and then took her hand, and spoke to her in the voice of consolation. ‘ Oh ! Mr.

Blount!’ she exclaimed, ‘how I have loved that man it were vain to speak; my actions, my actions have shewn it. I gave up for him my friends—I abandoned for him my home—I incurred for him guilt—I became for him ——’ her voice grew deeper and almost hollow as she spoke, ‘the object of scorn and burning shame—and how am I requited?’ She paused for a moment, and then continued—‘You cannot know, it is impossible for you to conceive, what I have suffered, what I suffer: fretfulness, and coldness, and indifference, and neglect. He seems, too, as if it were *he* who had made the sacrifice, not I—as if it were to *him* that it had cost every thing that can give life a value;—and once,’ ——here again her voice sank, and her frame shook, ‘and once, he almost upbraided me with being what I have become for him!’

“My heart bled within me to see this lovely

creature in her agony; it warmed towards her more than ever it had before done; it hurried me, by the circumstance of the moment, into more than my natural and real feeling. ‘And what,’ she continued, ‘what have I to look to?—a life like this is too, too dreadful; and I am not fit to die!’

“It is very easy, my dear Frewin, for moralists, seated quietly in their closets, to expatiate upon the guilt incurred by passion. In the coolness of their blood—in a position free from all tempting,—it may seem an easy thing to them to keep on the even tenour of their way—to walk without dread or chance of falling. But an occasion like that which I have been describing, when it happens in real life, is, I believe, almost more than the most stoical can come through blamelessly. I will confess that the temptation was too strong for *me*,—and—I forget the words in

which I spoke—but I know that I had not spoken for two minutes before I found myself urging her to trust her happiness in my hands—to seek an asylum in my heart and home. I spoke, as I fancy most men do in such circumstances, rapidly, and with warmth;—she listened without answering a word. At last, when I had ceased, she said,—‘No; that can never be now. Time was when we might have loved each other—but that, in despite of what you say, is passed for ever in both of us.’ I was going to interrupt her, but she went on,—‘Yes, in both of us; the bloom of her heart is gone—it is the force of circumstance which now misleads you—we never can love each other as both deserve to be loved—it can never be!’ I felt the truth of this to my very heart, and I remained silent. ‘I am unhappy,’ she continued, ‘I am most wretched—but I have chosen

my lot, and I must endure it as best I may.—Come,’ said she, rising up, and collecting at once, as it were, both mental and physical strength,—‘come—we have been here long enough, too long, perhaps—let us be going.’ I helped her upon her horse, and we proceeded homeward. We spoke but little, and that little was on quite indifferent matters.

“The next morning I received from her a note, which you will find enclosed: the consequence was that, the day after, I affected sudden business to call me away, and I left Spa.* I had, I will confess to you, a very considerable struggle with myself before I could resolve on this step. If I had remained, there can be small doubt, after what had passed, that, in the end, I should have prevailed. But, alas! to what purpose would it have been? There is but *one* thing,

* This letter is dated from Lausanne. ED.

which can in the very least palliate misconduct of this kind—it is the most entire and uncontrollable affection; and this, as she most truly said, we never should have felt for each other. On my part, it was pity, and old remembrance, and the craving of a heart *usé*, (I will not say *usagé*,) which led it morbidly to such occupation and excitement;—on hers, it was old remembrance also, and present despair, and the resentment arising from ill-requital;—but on neither side was it, nor would it have become, enthralling and unmingled love. If the matter had been to be decided on the moment, and in her presence, I am far from thinking that I should have reasoned thus coolly and well—but she *wrote* instead of *speaking* to me—and I had time to pause and think. When once I had made my resolve, I acted. I wrote to her immediately—the tenour of

my answer you can conceive. I anticipate, my dear F., what you will say to me about my folly and imprudence; but, believe me, no one can be more thoroughly aware of them than I am. No one can rejoice more truly at my escape, both from very great unhappiness on my own score, and from drawing additional misery (for so it certainly would have been) on the head of one already so miserable.

“When I went to take leave of them, and to tell Lumley of my purposed departure, his wife was in her own room, and remained there till she knew my visit must be drawing towards a close. She then came down; and when L. said to her,—‘Only think, our friend Blount is going to leave Spa; do persuade him to stay,’ she gave me a look of affectionate gratitude, which was more sweet to my heart than any triumph

could have been, had she been the companion of my journey. She played surprise very ill—which gratified me; for it confirmed me in my belief that, whatever her faults might be, no circumstance could ever have made her a hypocrite. She looked very pale, and was wholly without rouge; her hair was fastened straight back from the face without curl, which added to her *abbattue* appearance. She spoke very little, but she looked in a manner which again almost shook my resolution; for she seemed to be thinking that, when I was gone, she should have none left in the world who loved her. I wonder L. suspected nothing—for there was a consciousness in the manner of both of us, which could scarcely fail to be apparent. But he did not—or, if he did, he concealed his suspicion perfectly.

“When I rose to go, I took her by the

hand, and said a few sentences of as much kindness as the presence of Lumley would permit. She answered me in the same way; but she pronounced the word *friend* in a tone which went to my soul. L. and I parted cordially enough, in appearance; but my heart smote me for my hypocrisy, in thus speaking fairly to a man against whom my indignation was so great;—but *ainsi va*——

“As I left the house, I looked up to her windows. She was there—she smiled to me as she kissed her hand; but tears swam in her eyes, and belied the expression. I turned the corner which shut her from my sight.—When shall we meet *next*?——

* * * * *

THE ENCLOSURE.

“I have determined to write to you, because I am sure *you* will not misconstrue my

so doing. After what has passed, it is better, far better, for all parties, that we should cease to meet. There is only one way to insure this; which is, that you should leave this place. It is to entreat this kindness of you that I write to you now. In what you said to me this morning, you were led away by the circumstances of the moment to say far more than you feel, or can feel. Indeed, you could not but become conscious of this, on a moment's reflection. No! I repeat now what I said to you at the time—we never can love each other as alone we would consent to be loved. You see the confidence I have in your honour and good feeling by writing thus; but, having that confidence, it would be a paltry affectation, from which, at least, I always have been free, not to speak with perfect frankness, and explicitly, as I speak at all. No!—I never can love

you as alone you would be willing to be loved. My heart is spent, exhausted—it has lavished all its feelings upon *one* object; and though that love has been ill-requited in the same degree as it should have been the reverse, still the gift has been made—it has left me with no more to give. When I placed my whole happiness, and hopes of happiness, in *his* hands, I well knew the step was irrevocable. I knew it was taken once and for ever; and, although I little looked to its proving what it has proved, I feel as strongly as at first, that it was, is, and must be ‘once and for ever’ still. Neither could *you* love *me*, as alone *I* would be loved. You have loved too often—you have used your best affections too much and too frequently, ever again to feel a passion, such as at one time (you see I am indeed frank) might have existed between us. Recollect that, to-day,

I remembered Julia, though you had forgotten her. You deceived yourself for a moment—by this time, I am sure, you feel it was only for a moment.

“ But friendship—strong, real, delicate friendship—I am confident you do feel for me ; and I am confident, also, that you will acknowledge that it can best be shewn by acting as I now request you. If I had a lower opinion of you than I have, I should not write thus, lest you should construe the request that you should go, into a disguised wish that you should stay. But I know your nature ; and I know that it is above either feeling or imputing a littleness. I feel that I can speak to you frankly and from the heart, without the shackles of those conventional half-falsities which usually clog and degrade the communication between your sex and mine. Let me hear from you one line,

to communicate your determination ; I have no fear as to *what* it will be.

“ And now, God bless you !—it has given me more pain than probably I ought to confess to you, to determine as I have done ; for I feel that I am sending from me one who, desolate as I now am, has feelings of truer kindness towards me than any I have known for a long time. We shall probably never meet again ; but, believe me, I shall always remember that I have had in you a friend, who has ever, in good report and ill report, done me more than justice ; and has now felt with the tenderness of a feeling heart, and the warmth of a friendly one, for the unhappiness of the lost, wronged, heart-broken creature, who now bids him farewell for ever.—Once more, God bless you !

“ Tuesday Evening.”

CHAPTER VI.

“ The faltering speech—the look estranged—
Voice, step, and life, and beauty changed.”

MOORE.

• WHETHER or not Mr. Blount was correct in his belief that, ‘if he had remained, he should have finally prevailed’—I leave it to my readers individually to judge. It is certain that, by making the request that he should go, Mrs. Lumley betrayed a conscious fear of his power if he stayed; or, as a friend of mine, who saw the original letters, observed, “By saying she never can love again, she proves she half can.” But my purpose in giving at length this portion of the

correspondence, was to shew the effect of the first blunting the delicacy of the moral feeling in the female mind. It is evident that Blanch was here in danger of *a second* fall ; a crime so repugnant to our ideas of moral interest, that scarcely any fictitious writer has ever ventured upon its delineation ;* and from even this distant approach to which I should have forborne, if I had been composing an imaginary story. It is true that, by her own strength of mind, and by the good feeling of the other party, she did not draw very near to the precipice ; but neither was her escape so triumphant as to place her above the reproach of having been in danger. Truly, indeed, did she describe herself to be desolate and heart-broken ! Her first mar-

* I must except M. Benjamin Constant's novel of *Adolphe*, a work in which a singularly intimate knowledge of the female heart is embodied with great power of language and of illustration.

riage was unhappy from its being forced, uncongenial, and ill-sorted : her second was unhappier still, from the sense of guilt being added to that of misery. In this instance, she had chosen for herself; she had broken through every tie, and sacrificed every advantage, to obtain the object of that choice : *here* she had no one to reprove but herself, save only him, to condemn whom was to her the severest of condemnations.

It is not my purpose to dwell upon Mr. Lumley's conduct towards her. It is too revolting to contemplate ingratitude and ill-requital to such degree, and of such a nature. Still this is, I believe, far from a singular case. There are, if rumour on these subjects may be believed, existing instances of ill-requital as severe, where the sacrifices have been even greater. There is no need to confine ourselves to the parties before us

for a strong and appalling confirmation of the truth, that ‘the crime carries the punishment along with it.’

For about a year after Mr. Blount left Spa, in the manner I have shewn, the Lumleys continued to travel on the Continent—their dissensions becoming daily more painful. His moroseness and harshness increased, and her health sank in proportion. It is not to be supposed, indeed, that a creature so sensitive as she was, could long endure so continued a conflict of the feelings, without very materially and visibly suffering in bodily health. And did not this touch his heart? Did not the decay of that lovely being, who had sacrificed all for his love, strike him with remorse for his unkindness, and change his demeanour towards her? Alas! I am compelled to answer, No. As the low spirits, and perhaps the irritability, of illness became

stronger in Blanch, he who had been the sole cause of all—illness, and depression, and querulous temper,—he shrank from enduring the effects of his own actions ;—the effects in her aggravated and reproduced their own causes in him. And, as her beauty waned, that beauty which had first attracted him, and of which he had afterwards been so proud, he seemed almost to consider its decrease as a subject of blame to her,—as if it were the effect of her own will, exerted to give him displeasure. And such is man ! or, to speak more justly—there are some men such !

I proceed with real reluctance and pain to state the result. Blanch was, at length, directed by her physicians to pass the winter at Nice,—her health, in fact, being too precarious to pass it elsewhere. Will it be believed that, two days after their arrival there, Mr. Lumley left her to come to London, on

a plea of urgent business? Business!—what business could be so urgent a duty,—what business could be so sacred,—what business *ought* to have been so readily undertaken,—as that of tending, cherishing, and succouring the sickness of her whose whole life, now whose life itself, had been sacrificed to him?

Mr. Lumley's adieux were made slightly and hastily. If he had any touch of feeling at this moment, it shewed itself only in his avoiding its being too strongly called into play. With her, the case was far different. She leaned from the window as he got into his carriage and drove rapidly away; and, when she had seen him turn from her sight, she threw herself back upon a couch, and wept unrestrainedly. She felt that she was now *alone in the world*. That sensation of isolation, which, even when slight and temporary, is the most painful and depressing

thing in the world, now struck upon her heart in all its weight and coldness. Her late treatment sank, for the time, from before her view; and she thought only of the man who alone had possessed her love—who had called into action, in their fullest extent, those strong capabilities of loving, which had been hidden and made dormant by her former marriage. She had lavished on him all the affections of a warm heart—all the energies and admiration of a lofty and powerful mind. Her attachment to him had been the destiny of her life;—he was gone from her, she felt, for ever. She was alone in the world!

Pride, womanly pride, that strong support under similar circumstances, and which had once existed to so great a degree in Blanch, had now no power. It was chilled and weakened by illness and long-suffering,—it sank

beneath the feeling of loneliness, as well as of desertion, so icy, so paralyzing. Her heart had no longer strength to be proud;—it had wasted with her bodily health, and was as worn out as that.

Her health was indeed fast sinking. The face was fallen, the eye was hollow, the form shrunken. The slow fever of grief had preyed upon her frame, and reduced it to its former shadow. Who now would have known the bright, animated creature, who answered to the name of Blanch Delvyn? Who would have recognized in the pale, wasted, prematurely-aged woman, the brilliant Lady Montore; who, in the whirl of society, had endeavoured to lose sight of her repulsive home—who was the ‘observed of all observers,’—the Queen, for a time, of the transitory kingdom of London Fashion? Who, even, could have traced, in what she was

now, the mature and lovely woman, who, made still more beautiful by accomplished love, had appeared on the Continent with Lumley, as his newly wedded bride? Alas! she was totally changed from all these. Their beauty had faded under the finger of disease,—the brilliant and animated wit of the two first, as well as the fine overflowing fondness of the other, had become withered under care and anxious suffering—they existed no more. Left by all, even by him for whom *she* had left all, she was now tottering to the grave without a companion to cheer her—without a friend to listen to her sufferings, to smooth for her the pillow of death.

The shock which she had sustained by Lumley's departure, though it had been anticipated, and though she had prepared herself for it, affected her severely. And, thus additionally weakened, she had to undergo

another—not, indeed, equally trying to the feelings, and of a totally different kind; but still which, situated as she was, was distressing to her to a strong degree.

She was one day walking on one of those terraces looking to the South, which form the distinctive character of the place, opening its bosom, sheltered on all the colder sides, to the soft Mediterranean, and its warm sun and gentle breezes. The blue sea contrasts agreeably with the white houses and olivetrees of dusky green which stud its shore; and the whole scene is lighted up by that gladsome and genial southern sun, which revivifies the sinking invalid, and retains the vital warmth (almost beyond its time) in the frame, chilled by the icy grasp of disease and death. One day, after Mr. Lumley had been gone some little time, Blanch was seated upon a bench of one of these walks,

gazing upon the fair scene before her, and taking, as it were, her last last looks at Nature, when a gentleman and a lady came and seated themselves upon the same bench, leaving but small space between them and her. For a little time, the two parties did not take any notice of each other. Blanch continued gazing upon the sea, and had scarcely remarked the coming of her companions. They had merely given a cursory glance to her as they sat down, and for a time they chanced to continue silent. At length the gentleman made some observation to his companion. The voice thrilled through Blanch's frame, to her very marrow. She started and turned round—it was Lord Montore who was seated by her side! Wrapped in cloaks, and shawls, and veils, she had not been recognized by him, to say nothing of her changed appearance; and of

him she had taken no notice, till his well-known voice had roused her. She rose instantly, and strove to walk onward, but the revulsion had been too strong—a half-scream, half-groan, struggled for a moment in her throat, she sank backwards, and would have fallen to the ground if Lord Montore (who still did not recognize her, but had been attracted by her exclamation) had not caught her in his arms! He lifted her veil to give her air—and then, pale and changed, and furrowed with grief and suffering, he beheld, for the first time since she had left him, the once-beautiful features of his wife.

I will not attempt to depict what his feelings might be at that moment; I have, indeed, no accurate means of judging; but any one with a human heart in his bosom must have been moved at seeing one whom he had once loved, *thus*. Lord M. had mar-

ried a second time, and his present wife was the lady now with him. She did not at all know how to account for her lord's very evident, and very unusual agitation; but before she had time to satisfy her curiosity, or he to recover from his surprise, Blanch, who had fainted from weakness only, began to come to herself, and she found herself in Lord Montore's arms.

The situation was equally embarrassing for both of them; common humanity would not allow him to leave her thus, and he scarcely knew how to address her. Fortunately, at that moment, Blanch's servant approached with her carriage. She had only got out to walk for a short time, and it now drew near. With a few expressions, therefore, of thanks on one side, and of hopes of speedy restoration on the other, they parted. Neither said any thing to shew that the other

was recognized; but both knew that they both were so.

This incident made upon Blanch a stronger effect than the temporary indisposition which it occasioned. Lord Montore, she was conscious, must have seen her changed state; did he, could he, attribute it to its real cause?—This was the thought which haunted her and preyed upon her. Sometimes she thought that he would ascribe her altered appearance to illness alone; but, then, he would know that Mr. Lumley was with her no longer; and that would lead him to the just conclusion. She felt like the brave Douglas in the ballad, who laments, not for death, but that his succumbing should have been witnessed by his enemy—"Earl Percy sees my fall!" was the feeling which was uppermost and last in his mind. "He will see that I am left in

my turn," thought Blanch, "and that I suffer from it more than he did. If he knew all, he would see, that he is indeed awfully avenged !"

Blanch's health continued to decline. Her health preyed upon her spirits, and her spirits upon her health again. She heard from Lumley briefly, coldly, and at long intervals: and he never spoke of return. She became weaker and weaker ; and at length could not leave the house. What does it avail to pause upon my story, and to shrink from coming to its end ? Her strength wasted by regular and rapid degrees. With the exception of her servants, she had no one to tend her illness ; with the exception of her servants, she had no one to witness and to soothe her death !

“ By foreign hands her dying eyes were closed,
By foreign hands her decent limbs composed !”

Such was the end of Blanch Delvyn !

But part of the lesson remains to be read ;
—I shall add her last letter to Mr. Lumley,
and I shall add no more. Such things need
no comment.

“ — Before this reaches you, I shall
have ceased to be. My physicians, and my
own sensations alike tell me that I have not
many days to live. A crowd of things rush
upon my mind that I would wish to say to
you at this moment ; and yet I cannot
say them ; perhaps for their very number.
The feelings of the last years of my life
throng upon me together, and are mixed in
an undistinguishable and most oppressive
mass. Oh ! that you were here, that I might

speak ; for I am too weak to arrange my ideas consecutively, or even to put them upon paper when I have done so.

“ I will not upbraid you. You must have feelings of self-reproach which I would strive rather to lighten than to add to. My life was doomed to be unhappy—I was wretched when first I knew you ; must I say that I am more wretched, now ? Oh, Lumley, you have cost me many a pang that I have pent up within my heart—many that you must have seen, and ought to have pitied !—But I have said that I would not reproach you, and I will not.

“ And yet, it is dreadful to die in this way ! no friend near to comfort or console me ; no counsellor to guide me, and I need guidance so much !—I pray, and for the time it calms me—but I would willingly not have had to pray alone.

“ Seek out Margaret for me ; and see her once ; tell her how I longed for her to have been with me at this time ; tell her that her friendship has been the chief blessing of my life ; and that I cling to it now at the last. Give her one of my rings, the emerald one. She gave it me, when we were both children, and I have worn it ever since. Let her wear it now.

“ And now, Lumley, I am to bid you farewell ; I have written till I can scarce see the paper before me ; *I cannot, I cannot*, say farewell for ever ! Believe me, believe me ! that, spite of all, my last word is, my last thought will be—God Almighty bless you !”

EXTRACT VII.

‘ The Rhine! the Rhine! be blessings on the Rhine!

[I now recommence my extracts from Mr.
Blount’s MSS.—ED.]

Mayence, September, 1790.*

THIS Rhine is a magnificent thing certainly! Notwithstanding all I had heard concerning it lately, it has, out and out, surpassed my expectations. I certainly was never so much struck and moved by mere scenery; but then I never before saw *such*

* Mr. Blount was, at this time, on his journey from Spa into Switzerland, after the occurrences detailed in his letters inserted in the Story of Blanch Delvyn. As the reader has already been made acquainted with her fortunes, I have purposely omitted any passages in this portion of Mr. B.’s correspondence, &c. which may relate to her.—ED.

scenery. Some mountain scenery may be grander, some river views more rich and *rians*; but where else shall we find united the busy throng of cities and commerce, the highest state of fertility, wildness amounting to desolation, and grandeur soaring to sublimity?

The 'Valley of the Rhine,' through which I have just passed, stretches from Bonn to Bingen, a distance of about eighty miles. The majestic and incomparable river accompanies you the whole way, while its banks present every possible variety of interest and beauty. In some places, the valley is narrow, with the hills rising like cliffs, from the water's edge, rocky and bare; but still with the vine cultivated in every cleft and crevice which has earth sufficient to give it root. In others, the banks are more decidedly wooded, and, here and there, they retreat some little

way into a fertile and highly cultivated valley. Villages and towns innumerable are dotted along the shore; and every now and then the ruins of a fine old castle, perched on some almost inaccessible rock, crowns the whole.

I went over the ruins of one of these strong-holds, which form a crown to the round mount of Gödesberg. They command an extensive and most striking view, especially to the Northward; and the remains of the castle are, in themselves, curious and extraordinary. I ascended to the top by a narrow stair, formed in the thickness of the wall, which five men could, in case of need, have made good against a hundred. Indeed, the whole way along the Rhine, I have been struck with the strong and almost inaccessible positions of these old "burghs." It is very picturesque certainly, and romantic

also, to see a strong-hold placed on the top of a peak, where almost “the birds would fear to build;” but it gives a lamentable idea of the state of society, when such precautions were necessary. One cannot but feel no slight degree of pity for the unfortunate peasant, who was obliged to submit to the tyranny of one of the barons, Chatelains of these castles, to save himself from having his throat cut by another.

Nearly opposite Gödesberg is the Drachenfels, the most remarkable of “the Seven Mountains.” It rises at once and abruptly from the Rhine, clothed beneath with vines, and towering, at the top, in bare and perpendicular crags. The ruins of a tower crown the whole; and so grandly do they soar into the sky, that I distinguished, at above two leagues on the other side, Cologne. Nothing can be more noble and beautiful

than the view from hence. Downwards, the eye traces the windings of the river as far even as Cologne; and, to the South, 'the valley of the Rhine' begins to spread with all its beauties. Close beneath, in the middle of the stream, lies Rolandswerder; with Rolandseck hanging above it, on the left bank of the river.

This is one of the numberless spots along the Rhine to which belongs an old and romantic legend. On the Rolandswerder (Roland's Isle) is a nunnery, in which the lady-love of Roland took the veil, in consequence of a false report of his death; and the Rolandseck is a hermitage, now quite in ruins, said to have been built by him on his return, that he might overlook the convent of his lost love, and endeavour to single her out from among her fellows, and to distinguish her voice in the chaunting of the service.

The story ends with her death from a broken heart, and his in consequence.

Nearly all the names of places along the Rhine have, as well as these, some meaning, descriptive or traditional. The sonorous and expressive German combines two or three words into a beautiful name, in a way which, in our language, would be uncouth and ridiculous. Almost every one of these castles and crags have some traditionary legend. In this mineral district, "the swart spirit of the Mine" is a frequent and very diverting agent. He seems to be of that class of spirits to which Robin Goodfellow belongs, playing all manner of knavish pranks, but without real malice, or serious evil; and, now and then, doing a good turn, in his own fanciful and wayward manner.

I was most particularly struck, however, with the legend attached to the rock called

‘the Lurley’—perhaps, from the peculiar beauty of the spot ; as also from the faculty of echo which the rock is said still to possess. It is a little above St. Goar, where the river becomes still more rapid, and its banks more wild and magnificent than usual. There were no horses at the post-house when I arrived there, so I walked forward along the river side. Just above the town, is one of the most striking points in its whole course. Between two abrupt turns, the Rhine assumes the appearance of a mountain lake, with the exception of its rapid and violent stream, which dashes against the rocks at the lower extremity of the reach. The cliff which forms the southern point is the rock of the Lurley, which is said to echo fifteen-fold. I conclude, if this be true at all, it must be from the middle of the stream ; for, to my great disappointment, I could make it

answer me no more than once, from the bank. This once, however, was clear, distinct, and beautifully toned. I was not the less disappointed from having composed, as I walked along, the first of the following stanzas, in anticipation of the effect of the echo. It was somewhat ludicrous to be thus baulked ; but, instead of altering or abandoning my stanza, I sat down and scribbled two more to the tail of it. The boatmen say that the rock is the abode of an *Ondine*, who, like the syrens of old, with her beauty and her song, lures the unwary to destruction :—

WRITTEN OPPOSITE THE LURLEY.

I.

How strange and wild these sounds are ! oh, 'tis
sweet

To breathe the name of one beloved, and hear
This countless Echo's magic voice repeat,
Bounding from rock to rock, a note so dear !

Alone to hear it, too—lest it should meet,
So loved and sacred, an indiff'rent ear !
One would not have this cherish'd, heart-nurs'd
tone
Received by any ear, except one's own !

II.

How soothing 'tis to sit upon the brink
Of this majestic river, and, among
These mighty crags, deliciously to drink
These our own echoes, as they float along
The answ'ring rock !—well might the fisher think
Such sounds to be the water-spirit's song,
And fable a fair creature to give breath
To tones so sweet they even lured to Death !

III.

Oh ! I could linger long hours in this place
Of manifold enchantments !—the soft light,
Form'd by the meeting cliffs—around their base
The splendid stream—the tow'r which to the
sight

Seems hung upon the mountain's beetling face—

--Oh! who can view such scene without delight?

'Tis one which rivets the retreating eye,
And which the full heart parts from with a sigh!

I was just scratching down the last couplet, in all the agonies of an uncut pencil, when the carriage overtook me, and I was quickly whirled from this truly beautiful and interesting spot. The legend, however, relating to the *Ondine** appeared to me so wild and romantic, and so peculiarly fitted to the scene in which it is laid, where the stream is dangerously rapid, and the overhanging cliffs are thus, as it were, almost vocal, that I have since been making enquiries of every body,

* The same superstition has, in our days, furnished the groundwork of the very beautiful and popular Fairy Tale of the Baron de la Motte Fouqué, published under the title of '*Ondine*.'—ED.

gentle and simple, concerning its details. I have picked up one bit from one, and one from another, which I have blended together in the legend of

THE NYMPH OF THE LURLEY.

In days of yore, there was occasionally to be seen, upon the Lurley, at sunset, in the twilight, and by moonlight, a maiden singing. Her beauty was of the most graceful and voluptuous kind, and her voice was the sweetest sound which had ever floated over the waters of the Rhine. Perhaps, both the scene and the hour entered for something into the extreme effects produced by her song. The Lurley is situated in the most beautiful part of the most beautiful of rivers. The rocks close in upon the stream, and overhang it on each side, and hence render it more rapid and tumultuous. The hour when she appeared

was always in the calm of the summer evening, or the still deeper calm of the summer night, when the moon sheds her radiance of beauty and of peace upon the gliding river, and makes its waves appear as though they were formed of living light. At such times as these, the maid would be seen upon the rock, her long golden hair floating upon the evening breeze, or fantastically braided and twined with river-flowers. And, then, she would breathe forth sounds of such exquisite melody—of such unmatched sweetness, and softness, and strength,—that the boatmen who were descending the Rhine, would become so enthralled in delight as totally to forget their boat—themselves—every thing but the music, which thus engrossed and charmed them. Hence would their boats, floating with the stream, no longer guided by their oar, become entangled among the

currents and eddies which abound about this spot, and be dashed to pieces against the rocks.

At length, so many lives were lost, through the irresistible fascinations of this syren's song, that the people in the country round began, in the simple creed of those early times, to think that she was endued with magical power; and that she exerted it to the destruction of the human race. From time to time, however, she was known to do kindnesses to the boatmen on the Rhine. She would sometimes direct the young fishermen who frequented the spot, where to cast their nets; and when they followed her directions, they were certain to make an immense draught. These fishers, who were the only persons who had ever seen the nymph closely, talked in raptures of her beauty, of her sweet voice, of her kind manner, of the real bene-

fits which she conferred upon them. Thus it happened that, what with blame, and what with praise, the Nymph of the Lurley became the chief subject of which all persons spoke for many leagues around.

At length her fame reached the court of the Count Palatine, and shortly was the sole topic of discussion throughout its precincts. In bower and in hall, by knight and by lady, by baron and by squire, the Nymph of the Lurley was equally the subject of discourse. It was observed, however, that the matter was more favourite with the male than with the female courtiers. One young knight repeated what had been told to him concerning her beauty; another related the magical effects of her voice. The ladies, on the other hand, affected to disbelieve the more prominent points of these stories, and threw on them all, as much as

they could, the coldness of doubt, and sneers, and utter disbelief.

At last, however, the son of the Count took up the cause of the Nymph of the Lurley,—and it is astonishing how rapidly a change was operated in the opinions of the ladies of the court concerning her. It is even said that some of the foremost among them introduced the fashion of dressing their hair with water-lilies, brought from the Rhine; which was reported to be a favourite costume with the beautiful nymph. But of this there is, I think, not sufficient evidence.

It was not long before the young Count expressed his determination to make a journey to the Lurley, for the purpose of seeing its charming occupant. Many persons, however, adopted the darker theory concerning this mysterious being, and tried to dis-

suade the young Count from so perilous an adventure—representing her as a witch, who put on a beautiful semblance, and breathed sweet music, only to lure to their destruction all who came within the influence of her charms. But the Count was in the full flush of youth;—and when was youth ever restrained by prudence, when beauty was in the case?

He set off, therefore, on his journey, accompanied by a brilliant suite of youthful knights, who burned to go upon so romantic an expedition. The Count made no secret of his intention of bringing the nymph away from the place which had been the scene of so many fatal mischiefs, and then judge impartially of the various stories in circulation respecting her. He embarked, therefore, upon the Rhine, in a splendidly ornamented bark,—shining with gold, and

streaming with his own banner, and the gay pennons of his various followers.

The sun had just set when they came within sight of the Lurley. A fine tint of deep rose-colour still glowed in the western sky; while in the east, the cold, clear, blue of night gave distinctly to view the bright stars which shone amongst it. The boats glided rapidly with the stream,—the current of which was already become quicker in proportion as they approached the Lake of St. Goar. On the rock of the Lurley the nymph was seated, singing;—her long hair was streaming upon the wind, and she held in her hands a girdle of river-coral. As they drew near, they began to distinguish the words of her song:—

I.

Come, oh! come

To my wat'ry home—

The white shroud of lilies waits for thee!

The glistening wave
Is the mortal's grave—
But oh! 'tis a sweet, sweet home to me!
I float in the cool
And deep, dark pool;
They sink to the sand of the river bed—
And their dying wail
Is lost in the gale,
Which ripples the river above their head!

II.

The King of the Waters
Hath many daughters,
Some for the lake, and some for the sea;—
But, oh! it is mine
To watch o'er the Rhine—
The Rhine, in itself, is an ocean to me!
Its waves are as bright,
When in clear moonlight
They break, while the current onward rushes;
And the vines hang o'er
The craggy shore,
And adorn its face with their brilliant blushes!

III.

Oh! Father! hear me!
The barks draw near me
To take me off to the dry, dry shore!
Where the waters flow not—
And the lilies glow not—
And the bubbling spring is heard no more!
Let thy car arise—
Let these mortals' eyes
See and shrink from thy matchless power—
Rhine, rise around me!
Let thy waters bound me
From these vain sons of a mortal hour!

It may be supposed that such a song as this would not be particularly prepossessing to the ears for which it was intended; but if any one formed such a supposition, he would be exceedingly mistaken. As in some more modern instances, the sound was so exquisite that the sense was wholly unheeded. The Count and his companions were entranced;

they scarcely breathed, lest the slightest particle of sound should be lost to them. The rowers, even, though composed of old boatmen, who regarded the nymph as an evil-doing witch, paused upon their stroke, and remained with uplifted oars, wholly enthralled by such sweet music. Nay, it is said that one of the oldest of them, who had been deaf for years, regained his hearing on this occasion:—but this needs confirmation.

The boats floated towards the rock, drifting with the current. The boatmen utterly neglected to attend to their charge. At length, of a sudden, when the nymph began the last of the above stanzas, and invoked the King of the Waters to shew his might, the persons on board the boats were, in some degree, roused from their torpor, by the violent heaving and swelling of the river, which began to rise on all sides, as though under the impulse of a vast but invisible

convulsion. There was no wind. The banners drooped along their staves, and the calm sky was unobscured by a single cloud. But the Rhine shewed every mark of a violent storm, which reigned in the waters, though it in no degree extended to the air. The waves rose in tumultuous agitation—rushing and foaming as though the winds of Equinox swept over them. “It is the work of that hell-born witch!” exclaimed one of the attendants; and he levelled his cross-bow at her as he spoke. The Count called to him to stay his hand, but he was too late. The man let fly his bolt; but a huge wave reared its crest before it, and the arrow fell harmless into the water. The river rose more and more rapidly,—and at last, three enormous waves, which reached the part of the Lurley where the nymph was sitting, assumed the appearance of a glittering car, drawn by two foaming horses; though some of the spectators

thought that this appearance was only the addition of fancy to a casual formation. Be this as it may, into the largest of the three waves the nymph threw herself, and as she disappeared from the astonished sight of the Count and his party, they heard her exquisite voice breathing the following words :—

IV.

I go, I go
To my home below—
'Tis sweet and fair with the river-flowers :
Coral and amber
Bedeck my chamber,
And gems shine bright in my liquid bowers.
Go, Prince, in peace,
The storm shall cease ;
A kind heart beats within thy breast ;
But yon churlish groom
Shall meet his doom ;
In the wave, to-night, shall he take his rest !

v.

The river shall glide,
To the distant tide,
And shine as it hath always shone ;
But I no more
Shall behold this shore,
I go, and am for ever gone !
But a spot so dear
Still will keep me near—
My spirit will float in this river-lake ;
And strangers will come
To my Lurley-home
Ages hence, for that spirit's sake !

There was now no longer doubt of the nature of this fascinating being. She was an *Ondine*, or Water-spirit. Over these the human race have no power.

Her parting prophecy was fulfilled in every particular. The only person who suffered from this expedition, was the man

who levelled his cross-bow at her. His foot slipped as he was stepping on shore, and the wave, having once closed over him, did not loose its hold again.

The Ondine has never since been seen on the Lurley; nor has her song been heard there. But the fishermen say, that she still amuses herself by imitating and repeating their voices; and, to hear these remarkable sounds, strangers still flock to the abode of ‘the Nymph of the Lurley.’

And now my romantic and poetical vein are both exhausted; for my fire has burned low, and my bottle of Hockheimer is out, and I can do nothing without these ‘creature-comforts.’ My fingers, too, are tired, and my eyes are heavy; so, to cure both ailments, I shall lay down my pen and go to bed.

EXTRACT VIII.

“ _____ Beautiful !
How beautiful is all this visible world !
_____ Hark ! the note,
The natural music of the mountain reed—
For here the patriarchal days are not
A pastoral fable—pipes in the liberal air,
Mix'd with the sweet bells of the sauntering herd ;
My soul would drink those echoes.”

MANFRED.

[From the Diary.]

Vevay, July, 1791.

I AM no admirer of Rousseau ; but this is not all—I am a sad heretic even about his works. For the man himself, he has taken great pains to render himself odious to every person of delicacy or good feeling. He has painted himself as every thing that is mean,

heartless, and disgusting; and we are bound to believe his own representation. But, leaving him, as Jean Jacques, entirely out of the question, I cannot be brought to consider Julie and St. Preux, as the model and perfection of lovers. I cannot regard the letters given to them, at all as such letters as would be written under the circumstances described; they appear to me to be overwrought and overstrained, and they consequently lose that penetrating touch of real nature which strikes home at once to the heart. I have attempted to read the *Héloïse* again—here on its own ground—with the rocks of Meillerie rising before my eyes opposite, and the name of every village and hill around recalling some of its localities: but, I confess, I have not been able to finish it, even here. I believe there must be some peculiar defect in my mental vision with reference to this

book ; for that which stirs so much the hearts of others, appears to me to be out of nature, and consequently falls blunted upon mine. Hence, the Héloïse is to me *wearisome*. When I come to a letter purporting to be written by the tenderest and most ardent of lovers, at the very crisis of his fortunes with his mistress, discussing to her the comparative merits of French and Italian music, what can I do but put down the book in despair and in disgust ? I have had deeper and stronger emotions called into life by one day's ramble among these stupendous Alps, than by all the romantic associations of this "*petite ville*" at their feet. In the one case Nature spoke ; in the other, a profligate and corrupted man.

During the months I have passed in Switzerland, I have walked over nearly every part of it. The grandeur and solitude of

mountain scenery have so much effect upon me, that, of late years, I have not always cared to meet and analyze the sensations which they excite. They were too solemn, too stirring—too painful, in short. If there be any thing which can impress the heart of an unreflecting or a worldly man with awe, it is witnessing the sublime and awful strength and solitude of Nature. If there be any time at which he will look into his own heart, and probe and search it, it is when he stands alone amidst such scenes. Nature appears herself before him, and points silently to her God and his !

How weak, how poor, do the evil passions by which he has been swayed appear to him then ! He wonders that motives, which now seem so slight, so unworthy, could ever have had the power of impelling him to action. And how differently does he view the conse-

quences of such actions; now, alone amidst mountains, and the concomitants of mountains—pine woods and awful precipices, and eternal snow—from what he did in the bustle of the world, and among the influences of worldly society! Those things on which he shut his eyes, now rise before him with reproachful intensity; those palliations which he dwelt upon, and viewed with microscopic exaggeration, are now dwindled to their real minuteness; the “small, still voice” within, which is drowned in the din of the world, is heard clearly and awfully in the midst of the mountain silence.

I have felt all this much, during the last months. Do as he will, a man cannot always run away from himself; his conscience will catch him at last,—and the longer it has been forcibly silenced, the louder and the more severely will it then speak. I have thought

more, in the way of retrospect and self-examination, during the last half-year, than in all the rest of my life put together. And am I satisfied with the result? Alas! alas! what a fearful question is that? What answer must I make to it? Must I say, that it presents me with time lost, powers wasted, heart made cold;—with those qualities which were given to cause happiness, having worked misery, —with the stream of life having been turned into the waters of bitterness?—If I speak the truth, I fear I must. As I have stood amidst the mountains of Savoy or of Berne, and gazed upon the delicate, and, perhaps, saddening beauties of the close of day, thus has my heart communed with itself—and the sighs which spring from the very soul have been groaned from my lips; and the passionate bursts of hysteric tears, which bespeak the spirit in its agony, have flowed from my

eyes. The visions of my youth have risen before me;—those whom I have loved have recurred to my mind with a feeling of deep and solemn tenderness, how different, and oh! how superior, to the throes of more tumultuous passion which they excited long ago!

I have thought at such moments that, but for fortuitous events, I never should have chosen the course which I have followed through life. I have felt as though my soul were formed to cherish the domestic affections, and to place its whole hope of happiness on their cultivation and enjoyment—affections which, in the full tide of the world and of youth, I have been accustomed to think so cold, and treat so lightly. *This*, at least, I shall not do again. No! I feel that there is something deeper, tenderer, and finer, than the ebullitions of passion, and

the indulgence of their fierce impulses. The evening of life needs repose, and the store for it should be made at noon. What store have I laid up? Shall I, at the end, be like the grasshopper in the Greek fable, who chirps and dances through the summer sun, and dies for want in winter?

Yes! I have lavished my youth too rapidly;—young as I still am, I feel as if the appearance of my person belied the age of my heart. I have been like a spendthrift, who anticipates his estate, and spends it before it comes into his own possession. I *might* have been happy—I feel that I might. I could have given up my whole affections to domestic life, and received deep happiness in exchange for them. Why, then, did I *not*? Alas! because I did not think, a few years back, as I think now! I have sought in the world for enjoyments in its place;

and I have found them few and transient, and productive only of remorse.

How has this knowledge flashed upon me now? During my wanderings among the Alps, the day-dreams which have floated across my mind have, nearly always, in some part of their progress, presented one figure to my view. In other persons and circumstances they varied, but in *this* they were almost all alike. Nay here, as I sit, in the late evenings, by the side of the lake, and see the water ripple at my feet,—and look upon the verdure and beauty around me,—and listen to those delicious sounds of evening which, breaking across the stillness of the hour, render that stillness more apparent and more grateful,—and imbibe those scents of freshness and of fragrance which the evening dew calls forth—I have, in my reveries, almost lost the consciousness of

time, and have turned to address the companion who used to sit by my side, over the Loire—but the place is vacant now ! Yes ! the remembrance of that moonlight scene is graven on my heart in deeper characters than I had thought—it is ineffaceable ! There was something so peculiar in the nature of our intercourse, that it never was, nor is it now, measured by its real duration as to time. The feelings of years may, by the force of circumstances, be crowded into the space of a few weeks ; and they gain greater power from their very condensation. In all my more tender and thoughtful moods, when the best feelings of my nature are in activity, and the evil ones are at rest, Antonia rises before my mind, and my thoughts dwell upon her dear remembrance. The tumults of worldly pursuits obscure, for a time, this image. But they are only like vapour upon

a mirror—they are speedily dissipated, and the true object appears again.

But it is vain to think thus now, still more vain to express such thoughts. I have forfeited the happiness which I might both have given and enjoyed—and I have lost it for ever!

And yet, if I cannot keep this recollection from my mind now, what shall I do when the Alps are no longer between us, and when I tread the soil of that country which she loved and praised so much? I remember, some years ago, I used to doubt what, when I visited Italy, would be the preponderating train of my thoughts—whether classic, or of the middle ages? I used to fear that in the multitude of associations arising from these various kinds of glory, I should not know where to chuse:—but both these objects are now thrown into shade by a third. It is not

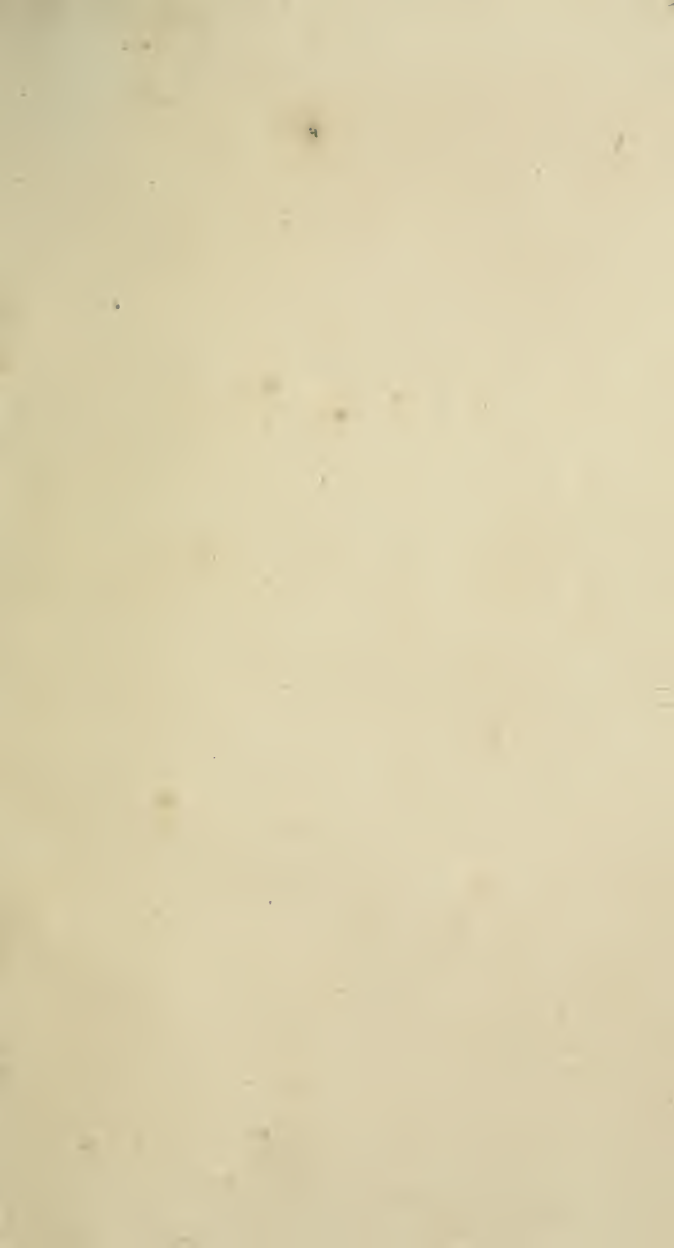
as the country of the Cæsars or the Medici, of Virgil or of Tasso, of the Capitol or of St. Peter's, that Italy will now find interest in my eyes. It is the native land of the woman I have loved; and one spark of passion eclipses, at once, all which the light of imagination or of learning can supply. I shall be in the same country, perhaps in the same city, with her; I shall be beneath that sky of which her remembrances used to be so keen, and her praises so fervent:—and yet I shall not see her. If the grave had closed between us, our separation could not be more complete!

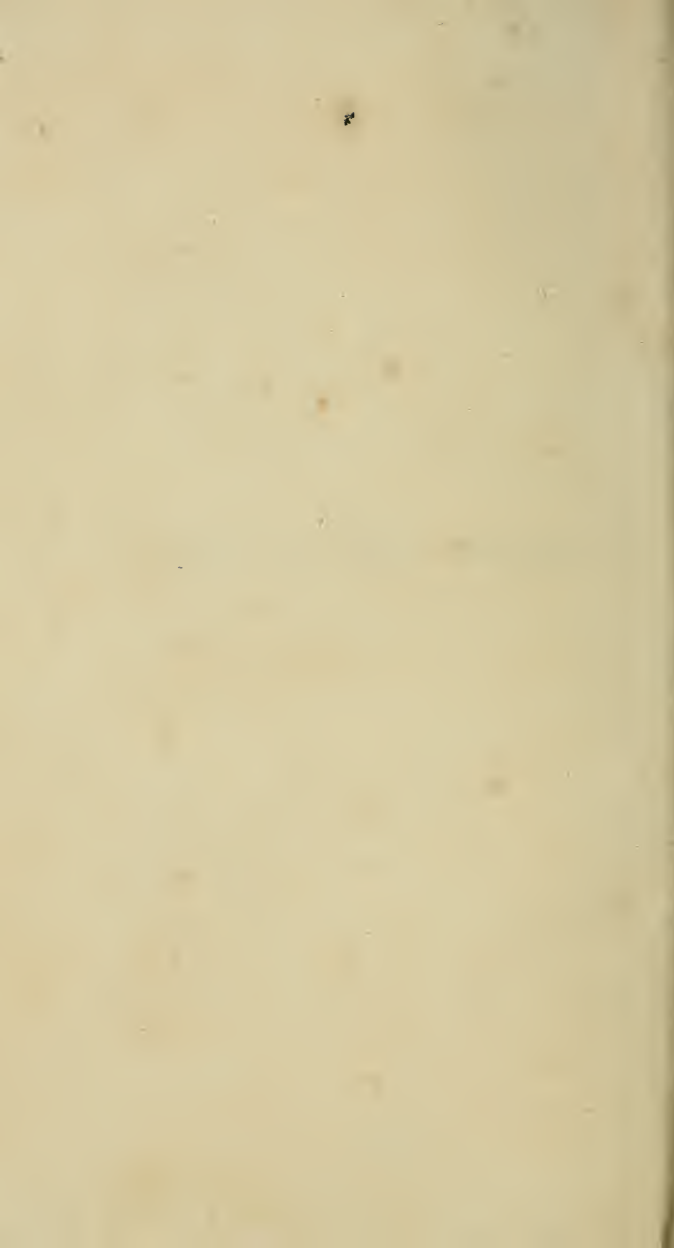
At last, then, I am about to enter Italy! —What a crowd of feelings of all kinds rises upon me with that word! I have always looked thither with such interest and high curiosity; and, of late years, my personal feelings with respect to it have been so

strong, that it will be with no common sensations that I shall descend the Alps into its bosom. It is a land which might occupy a life-time duly to explore: but I am a swallow-like traveller; like it, I skim over the surfaces of things, and I migrate almost as often. But Italy will demand a double degree both of time and observation. To such a country I shall not grudge it. And yet, though I have been drawing towards it for nearly the last two years, I feel almost surprised at being now about to cross its threshold. So true is it, that a hope is always agitating on the eve of its fulfilment!

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